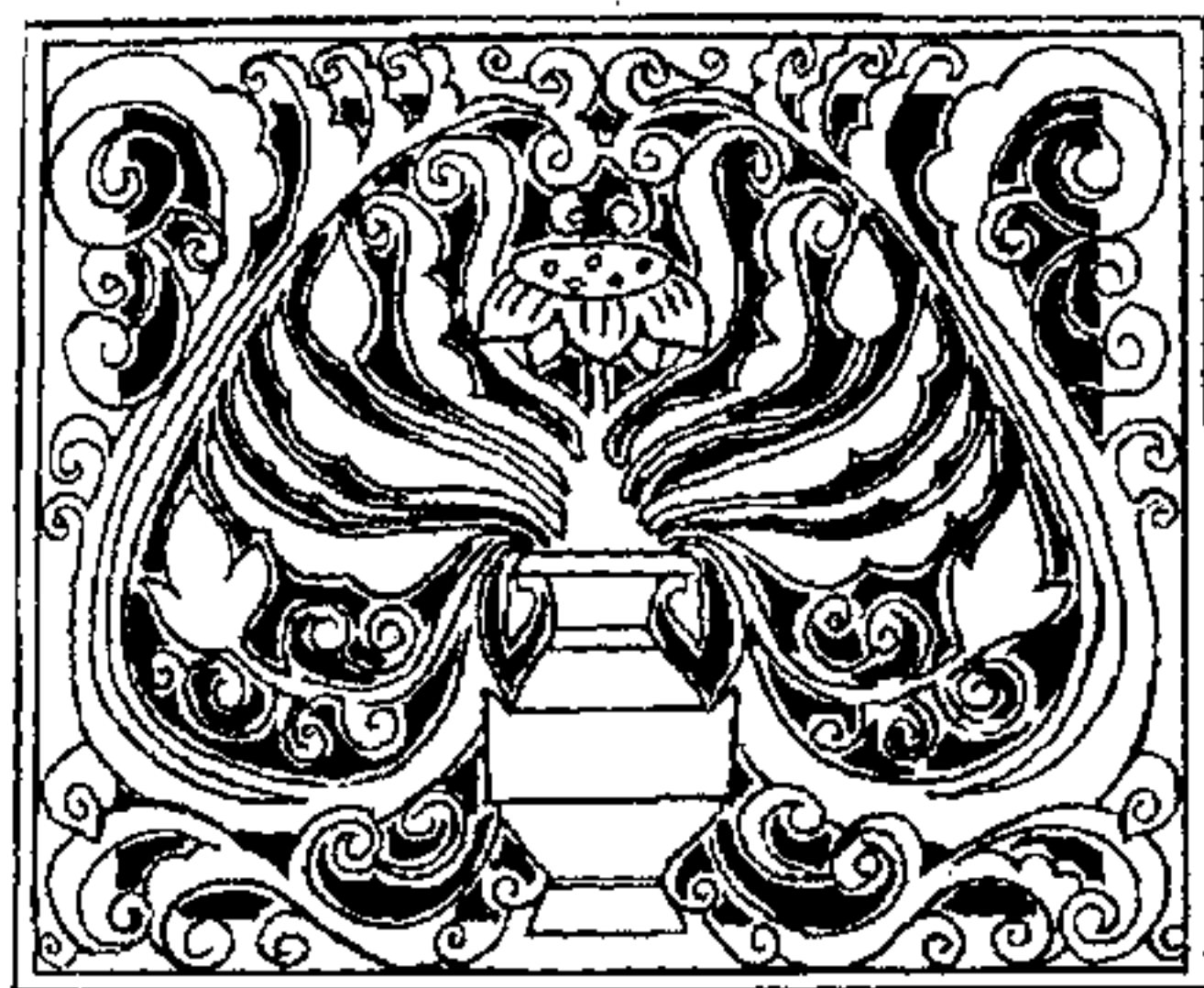




PRABUDDHA BHARATA

*A Monthly Journal of Râmakrishna Order
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896*

AUGUST 2000

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जाग्रत
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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

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No. 8

VEDIC PRAYERS

दस्मो हि ष्मा वृषणं पिब्वसि त्वचं कं
चिद्यावीररुं शूर मर्त्यं परिवृणाक्षि मर्त्यं ।
इन्द्रोत तुभ्यं तद्विवे तद्गुद्राय स्वयशसे ।
मित्राय वोचं वरुणाय सप्रथः सुमृळीकाय सप्रथः ॥
—Rg Veda, 1.129.3

अस्माकं व इन्द्रमुश्मसीष्टये सखायं
विश्वायुं प्रासहं युजं वाजेषु प्रासहं युजं ।
अस्माकं ब्रह्मोतयेऽवा पृत्सुषु कासु चित् ।
नहि त्वा शत्रुः स्तरते स्तृणोषि यं
विश्वं शत्रुं स्तृणोषि यं ॥
—Rg Veda, 1.129.4

नि षू नमातिमतिं कयस्य चित्तेजिष्ठाभि-
ररणिभिर्नोतिभिरुग्रभिरुग्रोतिभिः ।
नेषि णो यथा पुरोनेनाः शूर मन्यसे ।
विश्वानि पूरोरप पर्षि वह्निरासा वह्निर्नो अच्छ ॥
—Rg Veda, 1.129.5

O Indra, you are an expert in destroying enemies. You pierce through the skin-like clouds, which are filled with water, and bring rain. Again, you seize those clouds that move about like the earth without showering and force them to rain. O Indra! We glorify you for these great deeds of yours. Not only that, we shall tell the gods—Rudra, who is the destroyer of the world's miseries, and Mitra and Varuna, the gods of night and day—about your deeds.

Dear sacrificers! We invoke Indra to be present at our sacrifices. Indra is our friend, the protector of all sacrifices, and the destroyer of enemies. He helps in sacrifices and annihilates those who come to disturb them. O Indra! Please protect us. No one can stand against you in battle. Being afraid of you everyone becomes obedient, and thus you have no enemies at all.

O fierce Indra! Humble the enemies of your devotee, who is the chief of sacrificers, just as you did in the case of Vṛtra and others, using your splendid powers. In ancient times you showed the right path to our forefathers; similarly now, show us the way. You are known in all the worlds as sinless. Destroy our sins, protect us, and bring before us the fruit of our sacrifices.

Memory

EDITORIAL

'Stay Young!' 'Fitness after Fifty!' 'Grow Young with Age!' We come across numerous such titles in periodicals and newspapers. Over the years, the media has furnished plenty of ideas about how the body could be made fit and elastic. Hundreds of articles are being published about how and what to eat, and how and what to do in order to remain fit and healthy. Of late, however, we have gone a step higher. In recent years, the importance of the mind is being felt more and more. It is not unusual nowadays to see articles about the mind and its health. By mental health we don't mean advice doctors give to psychological patients. But there are various areas where the normal mind needs to be healthy and strong, and contemporary scholars are doing a lot of thinking in this field.

Of all the hang-ups of our normal human mind, forgetting is the most important one. '*Smṛti-bhramśād-buddhi-nāśaḥ*, from failure of memory comes loss of understanding,' says the *Bhagavadgītā* (2.63). What happens when there is loss of understanding? '*Buddhi-nāśāt prañasyati*, from loss of understanding one perishes.' So memory is imperative. Our knowledge, thinking, feeling, willing, action—in fact, everything that we do depends on memory. Memory is fundamental to our lives. Without the faculty called memory, perhaps there couldn't be life at all! But alas, we forget. Forgetting is a stumbling-block of tremendous dimensions. All of us—students, teachers, businesspeople, executives, housewives, soldiers, ministers, workers and others—are affected by this great malfunction. Just as we all want to remain healthy and young all our lives, we want to keep our memory flawless too. We all want our memory to be strong and sound. How are we to achieve this?

What is Memory?

Memory or remembering is the ability to retrieve what is stored in our mind either with effort or without effort. We have five sense organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin. Through these sense organs we gather information about the outer world and send that to the brain in the form of sensations. The brain decodes that information. To decode the information, however, the brain needs some reference. So it refers to our earlier experiences and compares notes. Thus we have the knowledge of the sensation.

Suppose you see a rose; the beauty of it makes you happy. But the matter does not end when you attend to something else. When, after some time, you think of the rose, it comes back to your mind. You will remember with joy having seen the rose. You may also remember its colour, smell, beauty, and so on. So your mind is not just a mirror, reflecting things that you see or hear or taste or smell. It is something more: It not only reflects what the senses reveal to it but also retains the sensations along with the feelings involved—pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, happiness and misery.

Though the comparison may be extremely poor, we can compare the mind to the computer: our mind is like the computer and not the ordinary typewriter. Using a manual typewriter you type something on a sheet of paper; when the paper is removed what was typed is gone. In a computer, on the other hand, what is typed is stored as memory. Even though the matter is printed on paper or sent to a floppy, the memory remains. So also the mind; it retains the image with all the subsequent feelings associated with it. How many things we see, hear, smell, taste, feel, think, read, and discuss in a single hour we can't count. All these numerous impressions are

stored up in the mind. And generally, at the proper moment they are utilized. But there is a system in storing these impressions.

How Memory is Formed

When we eat something while listening to music and seeing some picture, we think we are doing all these simultaneously. But no, we aren't. Our mind is catching up one thing at a time. The Indian yoga has discussed this idea clearly. According to yoga, whatever knowledge comes to us comes in the form of *vr̥ttis* or mental modifications. The whole mind becomes a wave, as it were. In an ocean, there will be hundreds of waves rising and falling simultaneously. But in our mind, only one wave rises at one time, goes, and another rises. Each wave is a *vr̥tti*. These *vr̥ttis* bring knowledge of the external and internal worlds to the *jīva*.

The whole process of memory-formation, according to psychology, is something like this: When the sense organ picks up information about the flower and passes it on to the brain, it is called *sensation*. The brain gets activated and tries to recognize or read the information that it gets using past experiences, and also reacts to it in an appropriate way; this process is called *perception*. After the object is perceived and the brain reacts to it in a suitable way, the knowledge is stored in the brain. This information is not merely scattered; it is kept in a systematic manner so that at the appropriate moment, the appropriate information comes out. Such a systematic storing is called *organization*. How is the information stored? It is all stored as images and *concepts*.

Patanjali's yoga has a way of explaining this. Patanjali simplifies the entire universe into three entities, collectively called *guṇas*: the knowledge-producing element called *sattva*, the activity-inducing element called *rajas* and the inertia-inducing element called *tamas*. The three put together is called nature or *prakṛti*. Except for our souls, technically called *pu-ruṣas*, which are numerous, everything else is created. From our intellect down to the stone lying on the roadside, everything is the crea-

tion of *prakṛti*. It's all a permutation and combination of the three *guṇas*. If the three *guṇas* have worked unitedly to form the mountain outside, they have unitedly worked to form the brain and intellect in us. They, again, work in unison to bring knowledge to the soul. The activity-inducing aspect, *rajas*, makes the senses go outward and gather sensation about various objects; it brings the sensations to the brain. The knowledge-inducing aspect, *sattva*, works to perceive it. Finally, the inertia-inducing aspect, *tamas*, stores the information in the mind.

Types of Memory

The world of memory is very vast because there are various forms of memory. Commenting on *sūtra* 1.11 of Patanjali's yoga, Sage Vyasa says that there are two types of memory: *bhāvitā* (imagined) and *abhāvitā* (real). Again, we remember what happened one moment ago, one hour ago, one day ago, one year ago, ten years ago, one lifetime ago or many lives ago. In the remarkable book *Lifetide*, Lyall Watson shares a personal experience (pp. 290-3) with his readers. He and his friend were touring in Greece when one day his friend suddenly began to describe, in a peculiar state of mind, a temple complex and a horrible incident that took place there. The next day, Watson accidentally visited exactly that temple in a remote area and, to his horror, discovered fresh blood. The friend of his hadn't visited the site at all but had clearly described the place and the incident in all detail! This is yet another type of memory, if we accept Watson's theory that his friend had been a priest in the temple in some earlier existence. In the same book (pp. 265-6), there is a story of a hypnotized person who began to utter something, and even wrote, in a strange language, which was later on discovered to be Osman, an Italian language of the pre-Christian era. Thorough investigation revealed that the gentleman had casually seen the words he had spoken and written only once many years ago in a book in some library. This is memory too!

The greatest contribution of Carl Jung to psychology was his 'discovery' of the collective unconscious, apart from giving importance to the positive aspect of the individual unconscious. Just as we have a personal storehouse of memory in the unconscious, there is a collective unconscious, a storehouse of memories of racial archetypes common to all, which affect an individual in a peculiar way. This affects our lives in more ways than we can imagine. This is memory too, and so the world of memory is vast as the ocean!

Forgetting and Memory

Every day we have numerous experiences, both pleasant and unpleasant. It is our nature to forget the unpleasant and remember the pleasant. Where do the unpleasant experiences go if we don't want them? It was known that the mind has two divisions: the conscious and the unconscious. It was Freud who gave importance to the unconscious, but he did it in a very negative way. As we said, Carl Jung gave a positive role to the unconscious. The conscious mind is that with which we function and remain active. The unconscious mind is the storehouse of impressions gathered by the conscious mind. It is also the storehouse of the impressions of the race to which we belong—the cultural specialities of the race. This storing is done either consciously or unconsciously. Thus whenever we try to consciously forget some unpleasant experience, we push it down into the unconscious storehouse. This process is called 'suppression'. There are instances when something suddenly skips our conscious memory and vanishes into thin air, as it were. Whatever doesn't interest us leaves our conscious mind and goes into the unconscious.

Our mind is such a super-supercomputer that it can store a whole world of information in it. There are billions of impressions in our mind. But why don't we remember all of them? What is it that stops the unconscious from revealing everything? There is something that obstructs the onrush of memory from the subconscious to the conscious. Ac-

cording to experts, it is our ego that acts as the barrier between the conscious and the unconscious. We live in society and so are society-conscious; we have a self-image. We are, and we should be, careful about our thoughts and actions. We hide our unpleasant thoughts and desire pleasant ones. Fortunately for us, unwanted thoughts are hidden and systematized. Had they come up at random, the whole world would have been a lunatic asylum! But there are times when the unconscious leaks out memories at random to the conscious, as in sleep. We dream so many weird things (horse having human face, dog with wheels instead of legs, etc) only because of this.

There is a second reason why some amount of forgetting has its positive side: suppose we experience something bad or, say, have incurred some loss. They say it is good to forget it. For the wise man, forgetting unpleasant things is a tool: it's a preventive rather than a corrective measure. When we constantly harp on our failures and mistakes, they prepare the way for further failures and mistakes. That way, forgetting the bad impressions is welcome.

But not all forgetting is good. Forgetting is an age-old problem. In the Vedas also we find mention of this problem. The Vedic sages formulated a prayer in order to avoid forgetting what was heard (since there was no writing in those days).¹ 'Salutations to the Supreme! May I remember everything. May I become a person practising concentration of thought without distraction. I have learnt enough. O my senses, do not fail me now.'

We quote from Carl Jung:

Anything you forget, anything from which you divert your attention until it is forgotten becomes unconscious. Anything in general that loses a certain energetic intensity becomes subliminal. When you add to

1. *Namo brahmaṇe dhāraṇam me astu anirākaraṇam dhārayitā bhūyāsam karmayoḥ śrutam mā cyodham mamāmuṣya om.* —Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad, 9.

your lost memories the many subliminal sense perceptions, the many subliminal and half-subliminal thoughts and feelings, then you get some idea of the upper layers of the unconscious. ... Despite the fact that repressions also occur in a more or less normal mentality, the absolute loss of repressed memories is pathological. ... The repression (or rather suppression as I would prefer to call it) is in itself a normal process which we use every day. Whenever you divert your attention in order to concentrate it upon another subject, you have to suppress the former contents of consciousness. And when you cannot lose sight of them you are unable to change your subject. Normally you can go back to them at any time, they remain reproducible. If they cannot be recalled, it may be a case of repression. If so, there must be some conscious interest that makes forgetting desirable. But, on the other hand, it might be a case of simple forgetting, which invariably happens when such contents are only loosely connected with other conscious contents. Normal forgetting is by far the most frequent process, while repression is an artificial loss of memory, an auto-hypnotic amnesia. It is not...justifiable to assume that the unconscious consists of repressed materials only, or even chiefly. ... Naturally if you assume that unconscious chiefly consists of repressions, then you cannot imagine any creative activity in the unconscious; ... you arrive at the well-known Freudian absurdity.²

Types of Forgetting

Forgetting is technically called amnesia. There are a few types of amnesia: anterograde amnesia, retrograde amnesia, transient global amnesia, traumatic amnesia, senility-related amnesia, etc. The impaired ability to store memories of new experiences, up to a total loss of memory of recent events is called 'antero-

grade amnesia'. To forget events progressively with the passing of time is 'retrograde amnesia'. An abrupt loss of memory from a few seconds to a few hours is called 'transient global amnesia'. Loss of memory for some time after receiving a shock is called 'traumatic amnesia'. And there are other causes for loss of memory like when a brain surgery is conducted, electric shock is given, hardening of arteries, insomnia, etc. It was believed during the 19th century that amnesia is a disease of the brain. The first person to write about loss of memory was Theodule Aramand Ribot. In his *Diseases of Memory* (1881) he said: 'The progressive destruction of memory follows a logical disorder—a law. It advances progressively from the unstable to the stable. It begins with the most recent recollections, which, being lightly impressed on the nervous element, rarely repeated and consequently having no permanent associations, represent organization in its feeblest form.' Though Ribot's law of regression was applied successfully in some cases, many exceptions were discovered. Of them one was, when memory was recovered, it was not the recent one to come up first. Sergoy Sergeyevich Korsakov was the first person to declare that amnesia is not necessarily associated with dementia or loss of the ability to reason. Freud said that hysterical amnesia was caused by protective activity. According to him, all sorts of psychogenic amnesia could be resolved through sessions of talking, called psychotherapy. Apart from these causes, memory loss is also attributed to organic causes like accident, head injury, brain disease, infection, etc.

Most of the reasons mentioned above are special cases of memory loss. We are concerned with forgetting in the case of normal people. Our concern here is to try to think of ways of remembering as better as possible. We should remember one thing. It's wrong to decide that as we grow older, we begin to lose the power of memory. We have seen men in their nineties who could remember everything far more clearly than those in their twen-

2. C.G. Jung, *Contributions to Analytical Psychology* (London: Kegan Paul, 1928), pp. 363-5.

ties. We generally see that old people have never-ending stories to tell about their good old days. Has their memory failed?

Why do we forget? As C.G. Jung said, it is a mystery how some ideas suddenly escape from our mind. They are wiped out all on a sudden. But in most cases ideas remain in our unconscious. They don't go away. But we can't recall them many a time. At important junctures we fail with our memory. Students especially are the worst sufferers. What they study the whole year should be kept in mind; and within a span of about three hours they must answer questions, given at random. Here's were memory dupes students.

How to Improve Memory

We said that all our experiences are stored in the mind. How to bring these images out onto the field of the conscious? According to modern scientists, much of how memory works is still murky. They say that memory involves chemicals called neurotransmitters. One of the neurotransmitters is acetylcholine. As people learn, the synapses—interconnections between brain cells—are reinforced creating a complex network of associations. With advancing age, the synapses somehow appear to falter. This will retard the capability of retrieving memories effectively. However, age is a small factor in memory-functioning. We all can recall the right things at the right time, provided we follow certain points.

The **first** point is mental exercise. How do we remain physically young after fifty, as articles in periodicals promise? Proper eating habits combined with walking and other exercises make for good health. Similarly, we should exercise the mind and memory. Suppose I have forgotten the meaning of a word. I need not rush to the dictionary immediately. Let me wait and perform some mental exercise; that is, let me think. Let memory have a chance. With effort, it will come out. By constantly endeavouring in this way, we can make the conduits that link the conscious and the unconscious strong so that memory can flow smoothly. Swami Vivekananda asserts:

'Try and struggle, they would come up and you would be conscious even of your past life.'³ He says elsewhere, 'Memory consists in getting back this combination and the same setting of the particles of the brain. The stronger the will, the greater will be the success in resetting these particles of the brain. The **second** point is calmness of mind. When our mind is restless and full of tension we don't allow it to function properly. It is like throwing a huge boulder into a lake. The water becomes turbulent and the bottom isn't seen. Meditation is the best means to concentrate the mind. The **third** point is our interests and likings. What interests us remains fresh in our mind. What doesn't interest us simply goes away. Most problems relating to students' loss of memory is lack of interest. A young boy would never forget which country won in a cricket test match and who scored how much. But he will not remember a theorem in mathematics. A boy will remember how to fix up a broken vehicle correctly if he is given the chance to do it, but will not remember what he studied. So what interests us attracts our whole attention.

That is the reason why Patanjali comments about memory in this way: '*anubhūta-viśaya-asampramoṣaḥ smṛtiḥ*, memory is when the *vṛttis* of perceived subjects do not slip away.' We should not let memory escape into oblivion. For this, we should be choosy in storing things and ideas in our mind. When a young man went on foolishly reading whatever he could place his hands on, a saintly person warned him thus: 'Why do you feed your mind when it is not hungry for knowledge? Undigested ideas create a havoc in the mind.' Unnecessary reading, thinking, etc are as harmful as loading our stomachs with too much food. The Indian system therefore insisted on systematic studies under the guru,

3. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), Vol. 1, p. 9. [Hereafter *Complete Works*.]

4. *Complete Works*, Vol. 6, p. 133.

and also on having a single field of activity. And ancient India has always stressed that there should be only one supreme end in life. A goal-oriented life will not crowd the mind with too many unnecessary ideas and so there will be peace. The *fourth* point is this: as we read from C.G. Jung above, every thought has some amount of energy behind it. When this energy goes, the thought is lost. Motion needs energy; anything that functions needs energy. Our mind also needs power to function properly. This power comes from purity of life. By leading impure lives we waste a lot of energy. Through the practise of *brahmacharya* the mind acquires extraordinary power which helps retention and bringing up of events and ideas as clearly as in a mirror. We compared our mind to a lake. If the water is muddy, we can't see the bottom of the lake. The water must be purified and then alone can the bottom be seen. The images too are reflected clearly only when the mind is pure.

A few days ago, a new set of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* had been bought for the Math. Seeing the new shining volumes, the disciple said to Swamiji, 'It is almost impossible to read all these books in a single lifetime.' He was unaware that Swamiji had already finished ten volumes and had begun the eleventh. Swamiji: 'What do you say? Ask me anything you like from these ten volumes, and I will answer you all.' The disciple asked in wonder, 'Have you read all these books?' Swamiji: 'Why should I ask you to question me otherwise?' Being examined, Swamiji not only reproduced the sense, but at places the very language of the difficult topics selected from each volume. The disciple, astonished, put aside the books, saying, 'This is not within hu-

man power!' Swamiji: 'Do you see, simply by the observance of strict Brahmacharya (continence) all learning can be mastered in a very short time—one has an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once.'⁵

The *fifth* necessity to improve memory is practice (*abhyāsa*). Repeated efforts to memorize or store ideas in the brain are necessary if we are to succeed. Without effort, we can't expect to retain things because our minds are not pure. How to make our minds pure? By giving up what are unwanted. We collect numerous unwanted things in our brain and thus there is sort of traffic jam. By being selective in our interests, we can organize our thoughts properly and thus memory can be fresh and alive. If memory is fresh, active and good, we are masters of any situation. We become successful everywhere. Our lives become meaningful. They say that during our lifetime, we at the most make use of about 10% of the total capacity of our mind. Thereby we are wasting away God-given capabilities. By leading meaningful, goal-oriented lives, we don't waste away our energies. Rather, we shall make the best use of God's gifts to us.

Of all memories, the best and most useful memory is that of God. Our goal is not job-seeking or passing exams or money-making only, though they are paths to a higher ideal. The highest ideal, says Sri Ramakrishna, is to realize God. To realize God, one of the best ways shown to us is to remember Him constantly or to repeat His name. To remember God constantly makes us perfect. So perfection comes from perfect memory. □

5. *Complete Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 223-4.

If I tell a lie, or cause another to tell one, or approve of another doing so, it is equally sinful. If it is a very mild lie, still it is a lie. Every vicious thought will rebound, every thought of hatred which you may have thought, in a cave even, is stored up, and will one day come back to you with tremendous power in the form of some misery here... Remembering this will prevent you from doing wicked things.

—Swami Vivekananda

IMAGES OF INDIA'S PAST

The Valour of a Woman

She was from Gujarat. Her name was Naiki Devi. The *Tawarikh-i-Sorath* says that Naiki Devi had to fight in a war but she had an infant son. The great lady did not hesitate. She fought the war with the son on her lap. And what a war she waged! Her valour stunned her enemies (cf. *Archeology and Ancient Indian History*, p. 92).

Strange Though it May Seem...

In ancient India, there were instances where queens were jealous of the sons of their co-wives. When King Gunachandra, after the death of his father, came to the throne of Saketa, his stepmother felt suspicious of him and sent him a poison-smeared sweetmeat ball to eat. At that time Gunachandra's two stepbrothers were also present there. He divided the sweet in two and gave each of them a piece. So the lady who tried to poison Gunachandra had poisoned her own son! Soon after eating the sweet the boys were affected by poison; physicians had to be called in for treatment and somehow all the three survived. We also come across rare instances when a king was poisoned by his own queen. We are told that when a certain king called Payeshi embraced the Jain faith, he did not attend to state affairs attentively. Thereupon his queen Suryakanta is said to have poisoned him and made her son king (cf. Jagadish Chandra Jain, *Life in Ancient India*, pp. 57-8).

Equivalents of 'Veda'

'Veda or "inspired knowledge," an old Aryan word appears in the Latin *vid-ere*, "to see or perceive;" in the early Greek it is *feid-enai*, infinitive of *oida*, "I know;" In Old English, *I wit*; in the modern German and English, *wissen*, *wisdom*, etc.' (Sir William Wilson Hunter, *The Indian Empire*, p. 129).

Do You Know How the Jami Masjid Was Built?

The well known Muslim historian S.A.A. Rizvi writes in *The Wonder that was India* (Vol. 2, p. 278): 'In Delhi the Jami Masjid, later known as the Qubbatul-Islam mosque... was begun immediately after Delhi's conquest in 1192, on the orders of Muizzud-Din Muhammad's commander, Qutbd-Din Aybak. In a desperate hurry, Qutbud-Din Aybak did not wish to send to Iran for engineers, where arches and domes were highly developed, but ordered the local Hindu architects to follow their trabeate system. ... Some twenty-seven temples were destroyed, the plinth of one of the original Hindu temples was converted into a courtyard, and a new plinth was constructed. ... The original short temple pillars were placed one above the other to achieve the desired height. The idols were disfigured or destroyed, and the corbelled ceilings and lintels were rearranged to form the new ceiling.'

Indian Agriculture During the Past Millennium

DR CHETANA MANDAVIA

Dr Chetana Mandavia is associate professor of plant physiology at Gujarat Agricultural University. In this excellent article, full of valuable information, she scans the growth and development of agriculture in India from the Vedic period to the modern times.

Agriculture is the systematic raising of useful plants by human management. Food production is the biggest motive for agriculture, but farming also provides substances like textile, fibre, dye-stuff, medicine, and ornaments useful for other purposes.

We human beings have lived by practising agriculture only since a short while ago compared to our long, long life on earth. Before taking to agriculture and farming, our ancestors have survived for ages—now believed to extend to protohuman forms as much as two million years old—on wild plants and hunting. Agriculture has been considered a major factor in transforming human societies from small, primitive bands into huge, technologically advanced nations. Civilizations have developed with the awareness and need for cultivation and food production. From the Palaeolithic (Stone Age) stage, when stone implements were used to hunt for survival, to the Neolithic (Metal Age) stage, when metallic implements were manufactured for tilling the land, hunting, etc, the advance of human beings is largely owing to agriculture. Coming to the history of agriculture, we can best explore the field through a survey of the available literature. This will ensure a logical approach and a chronological attention to the landmarks in the evolution of agriculture.

So far as India is concerned, deliberate plant raising began in this subcontinent more than 10,000 years ago. Indian agriculture originated in the Belan and Ganga valleys in Uttar Pradesh, with the domestication and cultivation of rice in the mid-sixth millennium BC.

Traditional farming was in practice in India since Vedic times. The earliest accounts of agriculture are found in the Vedas. It is held that the chief occupation of Vedic Aryans was agriculture and cattle rearing. The oldest text, the *R̥g Veda*, has ample references to cultivation, farming, etc. There are many prayers addressed to the Sun, rain, various trees, etc, in the Vedas. One of the mantras of the *R̥g Veda* (1.50.6) says, 'O Sun! You are the purifier and protector of everything. We praise your radiance, which looks after this world and nourishes all living beings.' This statement indicates the awareness of the Vedic sages of a biological cycle and food chain. There are prayers to Indra in the *R̥g Veda* and *Yajur Veda* for rains so that agriculture could be carried on smoothly. Special sacrifices were performed to receive timely rains. A mantra in the *R̥g Veda* (5.45.11) says that sages offer oblations to the gods seeking water. The 57th hymn (*sūkta*) of the fourth *maṇḍala* of the *R̥g Veda* is entirely devoted to agriculture. The furrow caused by the ploughman was called *sītā*, and there are prayers to the *sītā* in this *sūkta* so that the seeds sown in it might sprout well. The terms *sasya* (plant), *dhānya* (paddy), *yava* (barley), etc are frequently used in Vedic literature.

Though Vedic agriculture must be considered primitive compared to today's methods, Vedic methods were quite scientific for their times. The plough, oxen for ploughing, spade, wells (*kūpa*), etc were all routine terms to the Vedic people. Farmers during those days knew the concept of irrigation, and the *R̥g Veda* (10.68.1) refers to people irrigating

their lands and making noise to drive away birds that picked up grains. Just as in recent times, the Vedic people, too, would harvest their crops with sickles (*srñī*), tie them into bundles, and after usual processing, keep the grains in granaries. Farming is hinted at in the Upanishads too. In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (3.79), for instance, there is a mention of four exhortations, or vows to be taken. They are: Do not deprecate food (*annam na nindyāt*). Do not discard food (*annam na paricakṣita*). Grow more food (*annam bahu kurvita*). Do not refuse any guest and therefore, by any means, cultivate more food (*na kañcana vasatau pratyācakṣita; tasmād yayā kayā ca vidhayā bahvannam prāpnuyāt*).¹ That agriculture and farming were known during the *Rāmāyana* age is evident from the fact that Sita was discovered when King Janaka was tilling the land, and hence she got that name. There are ample references in the *Mahābhārata* to agriculture and farming. Duryodhana, for example, goes to see his herd of cattle in Dvaitavana. Cowherds are frequently alluded to, and Sri Krishna himself was a cowherd boy. *Ṛkṣāyurveda*, *Agni Purāṇa*, *Br̥hat Samhitā* by Varahamihira, *Arthasāstra* by Kautilya, all contain separate sections on Indian agriculture. These texts reveal that the ancient science of agriculture dealt with nomenclature, taxonomy, collection and selection of seeds, good germination, grafting, cutting, soil selection, manuring, and pest and disease management.¹ Kautilya mentions *kṛṣṭa* (cultivated), and *akṛṣṭa* (uncultivated wasteland), *kedāra* (fields sown with crops), *vāṭa* (sugarcane plantations), etc. *Manusmṛti*, the greatest law book of Hindus, mentions (2.90) that of the four classes of people, the Vaiśyas should look after cattle and cultivation. The ninth chapter tells that a Vaiśya should know the difference between good and bad seeds, proper periods of cultivation, and so on. The *Bhagavadgītā* (18.44)

says that agriculture, cattle-rearing, and trade are the occupations of the Vaiśyas.

Many Hindu rituals reflect our ancestors' respect for agriculture. Our respect for sacred bulls and regard for cows have their foundation in the great service they have rendered to husbandry. Rice is interwoven into the very fabric of Indian life. Down the ages, it has become an indispensable ingredient in religious rites, rituals, and festivals. It is also the staple diet in India. Some material made of cotton was discovered during the Mohenjodaro excavations. Archaeological evidence shows that this material could be dated as far back as 3000 BC.² Besides rice and cotton, the people of India had begun cultivating minor millet, grain legumes, oilseeds, and other crops since long ago. Sugarcane is of Indian origin. The word sugar is derived from the Sanskrit *śarkarā*. It is in rainy weather that sugarcane grows rapidly, while hot, relatively dry weather increases its sweetness.³ Similarly, tea went from India to China and returned to India during the 19th century. The Indian tea (*Camellia theifera*) grew wild in Assam from where it reached China. However, it was re-discovered and brought to India by the British.⁴ Besides these, there were several more crops which were indigenous to the Indian subcontinent. *Amarakośa*, the greatest Sanskrit lexicon, written in about 7th century AD, mentions several synonyms of various plants, revealing ancient India's knowledge of numerous species. With the use and cultivation of African crops, there came about a major change in the pattern of subsistence. The African crops, sorghum and millet, began to be cultivated in India.⁵ And these played an important role in its agricultural history, following the opening of opportunities for rain-fed

1. *Asian Agricultural History* (Secunderabad: Asian Agricultural History Foundation, 1997), Vol. 1, pp. 276-7.

2. Cf. *Asian Agricultural History*, p. 337.

3. Klimm, Starkey and Hall, *Introductory Economic Geography* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co, 1940), p. 199.

4. Sir W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Empire* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1893), p. 600.

crops and mixed farming systems. India's ancient maritime trade with several countries, specially European, included export of numerous agricultural products, specially spices, cotton, wood of various types, etc. It was Indian trade that stimulated discoverers like Columbus, Vasco da Gama, and others to undertake sea voyages.

This is an overview of ancient agriculture. The history of agriculture during the last 1000 years can be studied under the following distinct phases: (a) during the Mongol and Mughal periods, (b) during the British Raj, (c) during the early 20th century, and (d) during the post-independence period.

Agriculture during the Mongol and Mughal Periods

Agriculture was the chief occupation of the Indian rural masses for centuries, and the past 1000 years was no exception. In the year 1000 AD, the emperor Rajaraja Chola of the South made an extensive survey of lands under his jurisdiction. It is also said that under the Cholas, many small bridges (anicut) were built across the river Kaveri. A work of the 11th century, *Mānasollāsa*, mentions eight varieties of rice, distinguished by their colour, smell, size, and period of growth. Magadha was well-known during the 11th and 12th centuries for its rice. Kalhana mentions grapes in his *Rājataranginī* as the pride of his country (Kashmir). Marco Polo mentions spices, ginger, sugar, etc of Bengal, pepper of Malabar, and sandalwood of the south.⁵ India exported spices, cotton fabrics, and so on to various countries of the world. During the 12th century, India was troubled by the Mongol invasion. The condition of Indian farmers was

never so bad as during the oppressive rule of Alauddin Khalji. The entire produce was taken away from them and spent on the army. Muslim historians give detailed accounts of the victories of rulers, the court intrigues, murders and quarrels, but do not mention the crops and fruit trees grown then.⁷ The only record available is that of Ibn Batutah. He mentions rice, ber (*Zizyphus mauritiana*) mango, jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*), jamunplain (java plum), mahuva (*Madhuca indica*) and pomegranate. Batutah also mentions kudhru (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), a kind of millet, mung bean (greengram), wheat, barley, chickpea and lentils which were grown and consumed as food. Mention is also made of pepper, pan creeper (*Piper bettle*), and betel (*Areca catechu*) palm.⁸ Firoz Shah Tughlaq (1351-1388 AD) was the pioneer in canal irrigation. He constructed the western Jamuna canal by harnessing the floodwater of the Sutlej.⁹

The writings of Babar, known as *Bābarnāmā*, give an authentic account of the plants grown in India during the early 16th century. Among the fruits, he mentions mango, plantain, tamarind, mauveplain jamun, chiranj (cheronjee, *Buchanania lanzan*), jackfruit, amla (Indian gooseberry—*Embellica officinalis*), ber (*Zizyphus mauritiana*), kamarakplain (*Averrhoa carambola*), lime, citrus, gugul (*Commiphora wightii*), orange, date, coconut and toddy palms. The flowers mentioned by Babar are hibiscus, oleander, keoraplain (*Padanus odoratissimus*), chameli (*Jasminum grandiflorum*), and white jasmine. Babar also has the credit of introducing scented Persian rose to India.¹⁰ The *Āin-i Akbari*, as well as accounts of European travellers, throw some light on the crops cultivated in India during

5. K.L. Mehra, 'Pre-historic Ethiopia and India: Contacts through Sorghum and Millet Genetic Resources' in *Plant Genetic Resources of Ethiopia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 160-8.

6. Cf. *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R.C. Mazumdar (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1989), Vol. 5.

7. M.S. Randhawa, *A History of Agriculture in India* (Delhi: Indian Council of Agricultural Research, 1983), Vol. 2, p. 29. [Hereafter *History*.]

8. *History*, Vol. 2, pp. 65-8.

9. *History*, Vol. 2, p. 79.

10. *History*, Vol. 2, p. 151.

the 16th century. Wheat was grown in Lahore, Multan, Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Avadh, Malva, and Ajmer. Barley was grown in almost all parts of the country, but not in Bengal and Orissa. Chickpea was grown in all provinces. Rice was the chief crop of Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Avadh, Allahabad, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Khandesh, and Kashmir. Pulses included gram, lentil, pea, mung bean, uradplain (blackgram), mothbean (*Vigna aconitifolia*), lobia, kulthi (horsegram, *Macrotyloma uniflorum*), and arharplain (pigeonpea, *Cajanus cajan*). Oilseeds included til, linseed, mustard (*Brassica juncea*), and sunflower. Other crops grown were sugarcane, cotton, jute, hemp, indigo, poppy, and betel. Numerous vegetables were grown of which melons, a variety of gourd, brinjal, pumpkin, etc were popular. According to Paes, Nuniz, and Gariea do Olra, the last-mentioned a Portugese botanist, crops like rice, wheat, jowar, ragi (*Eleusine corocana*), millets, pulses like mung and horsegram were abundantly grown in south India. Apart from them, there were sugarcane, cotton, indigo, sesame, linseed, pepper, coconut, ginger, turmeric, betel, cardamom and arecanut.¹¹ Coffee growing was introduced into India centuries ago as a consequence of India's maritime trade with Arabian nations. The south has monopolized coffee cultivation.

The 16th century is also known as the 'Century of Plant Production' in the history of agriculture, and the greatest benefactors of India were the Portuguese, who, by their introduction of newer crops, enriched Indian agriculture. The Portuguese also introduced the technique of grafting to Indian horticulture during the 1550s. The plants introduced by them from Portugal, Brazil, Mexico, the Malay Archipelago, and East India were tobacco, potato, amaranth, cashew, custard apple, sapota, pineapple, papaya, chillies, agave (*Agave americana*) and allamanda (*Allamanda cathartica*).¹² The production of mango and

citrus fruits was greatly improved owing to their influence.

Towards the end of the Mughal empire, with the arrival of Western powers, a commercial economy based on oceanic trade began to evolve. But there was no technological revolution that could help manufacture tools and invent techniques that were scientific enough to produce crops in large quantities until this period. However, agricultural revolution in England, which closely followed the Industrial Revolution, profoundly influenced Indian agriculture too.

Agriculture during the British Raj

The British rulers of India during the early 19th century were from the land-owning aristocracy; and so they were interested in agriculture. The Marquis of Hastings was one such person. It was under his patronage that Dr William Carey founded the Royal Agri-Horticultural Society in Calcutta in 1820. Subsequently, branches were opened in nearly all provincial capitals. These societies and botanical gardens were chiefly responsible for introducing agricultural improvements in India during the 19th century. Basically engrossed in the acclimatization of several foreign varieties of fruits and vegetables, these societies often assumed the role of advisers, guiding people as to where and how to invest capital for newer agricultural ventures. The society in Calcutta experimented with flax culture and tinkered with tea.¹³

A demand for the establishment of agricultural departments in the provinces came not from Indians but from British industrialists. Owing to the non-availability of cotton in USA as a consequence of the Civil War during 1863-64, the textile industry of Manchester was facing a crisis. This necessitated the initiation of a systematic and scientific work on the crop to increase production. Thus, departments of agriculture were founded in various provinces and subsequently, a civil veterinary department, too, was established in 1889. The

11. *History*, Vol. 2, p. 211.

12. *History*, Vol. 2, p. 189.

13. *Asian Agricultural History*, Vol. 1, p. 84.

census of 1881 showed that 58.5 million people, ie 72 percent of the Indian population, were directly supported by agriculture. Sir W.W. Hunter writes in *The Indian Empire* (p. 576): 'The inherited experience of generations has taught the cultivators to adapt their simple methods to differing circumstances. The deltaic swamps of Bengal, the dry uplands of the Carnatic, the blacksoil plains of the Deccan, the strong clays of the Punjab, the desert sand of Sind or Rajputana, require their separate modes of cultivation. In each case the Indian peasant has learned, without scientific instruction, to grow the crops best suited to the soil.'

Lack of scientific knowledge notwithstanding, Indian peasants were dexterous, diligent and skilful managers of soil, water, and nutrients. They were good learners and quick to spot commercial opportunity. To quote Dr John Augustan Velour, consulting chemist of the Royal Society of England, who was in India from 1889 to 1891: 'Certain it is that I, at least, have never seen a more perfect picture of careful cultivation, combined with hard labour, perseverance, and fertility of resource, that I have seen at many of the halting places in my tour.'¹⁴

It will not be out of place to acknowledge the contribution of English scientists to the field of agriculture and botany. William Moorcraft introduced the cultivation of oats into India for the first time in 1816. Of the several other plants that the British introduced into India, mention must be made of cinchona, the quinine-yielding plant. The credit of introducing it goes to Mr Clements Markham. Sericulture was no doubt there in India, but it is held that the East India Company under Mr Berelst encouraged mulberry cultivation.¹⁵ Dr William Roxburgh's *Flora Indica, Plante Coromandelianae* and his portfolio of paintings of 2,382 plants, mainly the work of Indian artists, formed the basis of Hooker's *Flora of British India*.¹⁶ The publication in 1840 of *Organic*

Chemistry in its Relation to Agriculture and Physiology by Justas von Liebig is a great dividing line in the evolution of agricultural research. Understanding organic chemistry has helped interpret data pertaining to plants and soils. The application of genetics to developing new strains of plants has brought about a major change in agriculture. Also the application of fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, and the invention of a wide range of mechanical, electrical, and electro-mechanical equipments was the beginning of the evolution of agriculture from a labour-intensive industry to the capital-intensive industry of today, and in this, electricity has played a major role.

Agriculture during the Early Twentieth Century

Concerted efforts to improve Indian agriculture initiated by the East India Company were later on intensified by Lord Curzon in 1904, resulting in the establishment of several agricultural colleges and research stations in various states, such as Madras, United Provinces, Punjab, and Bombay. As early as in the 1890s, model farms were attempted in order to improve Indian farming skills. An agricultural college was also established in Saidapet, Madras, in 1891.¹⁷ The Imperial Agricultural Research Institute was established in Pusa, Bihar, in 1929 as a provincial research station and college. Apart from this, there were a number of commodity committees which dealt with research of various crops. However, agricultural universities were founded only after India's independence. The intensified education and research activities in agriculture gave the necessary impetus to farming, which registered remarkable improvement after independence.

Agriculture during the Post-Independence Period

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) was founded in 1952, and it has made a great contribution towards develop-

14. *History*, Vol. 3, p. 234.

15. Cf. *The Indian Empire*, pp. 606-9.

16. *History*, Vol. 2, pp. 40-1.

17. *The Indian Empire*, p. 615.

ing, popularizing and systematizing agricultural research and education. Today, with ICAR as an apex coordinator and funding body at the national level, and state agricultural universities as active cooperators, the country has one of the most extensive infrastructure and effective research and education systems for agriculture. As of today, ICAR has 158 regional stations, 10 project directorates, 30 national research centres, 86 all-India coordinated research projects, 120 zonal agricultural research centres, a central agricultural university and many Krishi Vigyan Kendras. In all, 26 agricultural universities are actively engaged in agricultural research, education and extension activities.¹⁸

Indian agriculture experienced a major facelift in the form of the Green Revolution in 1967-68. This was sparked off by the introduction of short-statured, high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice, and mutually reinforcing technologies, services and public policies. Actually, the Green Revolution is one of the biggest successes of India, cited globally, which has enabled to transform the country from its nightmarish begging-bowl status to that of self-sufficiency. It has also brought about an element of resilience in agriculture to ward off the threat of famines. The Green Revolution has obviously ushered in an era of rural prosperity. Its impact was so dramatic that India became a role model for many developing nations. Since that period, sustained and meticulous research, planning, and conscious efforts by our scientists, extension workers, farmers, administrators, planners, and political thinkers have given our agriculture the strength to come out unscathed through a series of droughts in recent times, including one of the most severe droughts of 1987.

Current Scenario

As a result of the Green Revolution, the total foodgrain production has increased from

a mere 50.8 million tonnes during 1950-51 to 192 million tonnes in 1994-95, and productivity has increased from 522 kg/hectare to 1500kg/hectare. This has resulted in a buffer stock of 35 million tonnes, and an export of 5.5 and 0.6 million tonnes of rice and wheat respectively in 1996. The threefold increase in oilseed production ended the humiliating import of edible oil. Also, spectacular progress has been made in the cultivation of commercial crops like sugarcane and cotton. India is the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables, the highest milk producer, and the second largest fish producer in the world.¹⁹ The services of Dr M.S. Swaminathan (agriculture), Dr Kurien (milk production) and a few others have received universal acclaim. Dr Swaminathan's yeoman services towards making the Green Revolution a reality, and Dr Kurien's 'Operation Flood', aimed at flooding the nation with milk have been so successful that their works have drawn the attention of the whole world.

Thus, self-reliance in foodgrains is perhaps the most significant achievement of India. The 21st century will witness far greater agricultural achievements than anything witnessed so far. Indeed, our efforts should be concentrated on supporting farmers to increasingly become farmer-entrepreneurs, able to harness technology so as to optimize returns obtained from the land. Swami Vivekananda had envisioned that India would become a superpower in the future. The history of Indian agriculture convinces us that his vision has already been translated into a reality. □

18. ICAR News, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 4.

19. R.S. Paroda, 'Dr B.P. Pal Commemorative Lecture' in *The Second International Crop Science Congress*, p. 2.

The mind which is attached to more than one thing can never reach the goal.

—Swami Trigunatitananda

Values: Their Significance

DR ANIL BARAN RAY

The author, a professor of political science at the Burdwan University, makes a passionate plea to the modern consumer to remember and nurture higher values in life.

What are Values?

The term 'values' is used in modern times as the acceptable alternative for old-fashioned expressions like 'virtue', or such variants of the latter as 'ideal' or 'goal'. Whatever name we give to it, what 'value' essentially implies is a positive approach to life. If we take the harmony between life and living as the essence of value approach, it follows that values are not merely ideas concerned with the oughtness of life, not merely with what ought to be, but also what needs to be actualized in life in the interest of harmonious living. Values therefore involve not merely 'ought to be' but also 'to be'.

Each individual wants to enjoy life. It is the natural urge to satisfy the basic needs in the form of food, clothing, shelter, security, and love. But this satisfying alone cannot fully bring optimum happiness to him. There is an inborn desire for self-improvement, and so he consciously or unconsciously strives for the satisfaction of his higher needs like self-actualization or self-realization. This transcends the ephemeral in him. It is here that values play a key role in helping the human being build a bridge between his lower needs and the higher ones.

In order to build a bridge between our lower and higher needs, or in order to achieve a harmony between life and living, Indian sages enjoined us to use a holistic approach towards our desire for enjoyment and social obligations. It is all right for us to live our life in our own way so long as we fulfil some social obligations, for society has made it possible for us to live and enjoy life. Man is not an atom; his existence is inseparable from that of the

society. Thus the basic message of the holistic view of life is that human life is neither partial nor isolated; it is interrelated and total.

In the context of such a holistic conceptualization of life and reality, ancient Indian ethos recognized fivefold debts or obligations of the individual to society. The *Yajur Veda* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* refer to them. These are our debt to the gods (*deva ṛṇa*), the sages (*ṛṣi ṛṇa*), ancestors and parents (*pitr ṛṇa*), humanity at large (*nṛ ṛṇa*) and the sub-human world (*bhūta ṛṇa*). The famous management personality, Prof S.K. Chakraborty, writes: 'This *ṛṇa*-blueprint for social existence is duty-based and more robust and worthy than the rights-model. Unto-others-from-me, rather than from-others-unto-me, must be an altogether welcome philosophy for an exalted human society.'¹

Our Debt to Nature

To make the individual conscious of his immense debt to nature for the gifts he is receiving from it—like air, light, water, food, etc—the sages deified these life-giving resources and made the human being acknowledge his debt to them through prayers, hymns and sacrifices. These hymns, gestures of gratefulness, were equivalent to the modern 'thank you' but only more intense and soulful. If there was any religious or ritualistic aspect added to it, it was to show gratitude and also the aspiration of the soul to be united with the universal soul.

In making people pay obeisance to the gods, the ancient sages achieved another ob-

1. S.K. Chakraborty, 'Rights or Duties?' in *The Statesman*, 30 July 1998.

jective. They personalized the relationship between the giving nature and the receiving human beings, and in so doing, they helped them achieve communion with nature. It is noteworthy that Tagore made communion with nature one of the chief goals of his educational philosophy at the Viswa Bharati university with this spirit in view. For Tagore, it was the resurrection of a realization that dawned first on the sages. Nature is not something to be utilized mindlessly and exploited ruthlessly. We go against our ingrained nature as well as nature outside when we become ungrateful to it, or worse still, exploitative. Modern man is realizing, at a great cost to himself in the form of air, light, and water pollution, that nature cannot be taken for a ride forever. That the importance of achieving communion with nature is dawning anew on the modern person shows at once the wisdom that our sages had acquired thousands of years ago.

Our wise sages taught that nature was not only a selfless giver but also a great teacher. Like the lotus opening up with the morning sun's rays falling on it, the individual too should open himself up, making his individual consciousness fully receptive to the rays of universal consciousness. Opening up is the law of nature. Taking his cue from nature, the individual has to open up too, moving from the lower to the higher, from the individual to the universal, from the self to the Self. In other words, the ancient sages 'employed' communion with nature not only as a means of making the individual grateful to his selfless benefactor but also of imparting self-knowledge, that he ought to be great not because of any hope of reward in heaven or fear of punishment in hell but because it is his intrinsic nature to be great.

Our Debt to Sages and Ancestors

The seers saw totality in fragmentations; they had a holistic vision of life. With such a broad view, our sages sought to dispel the darkness of ignorance from the eyes of non-perceiving ones. In grateful recognition of the enlightened service that the sages have ren-

dered, ancient Indian people tried to translate their philosophical postulates into actuality through self-study and continued practice. Self-study and practice were the means enjoined to attain Self-realization, and thereby repay the debt to the wise ones.

As for the debt to ancestors and parents, people were told to remember that it was they who gave us identity in society. As such, we are obliged to repay our debt on this count by making obeisance to ancestors on appropriate occasions and by serving parents through appropriate means and ways.

Our Debt to Society

If ancestors and parents gave a person his social identity, the numerous other people made his continuance in society possible. But for the food produced by farmers, the cloth woven by weavers, the education imparted by teachers, and numerous other contributions made by other people in society he could not sustain himself. It is the sacred duty of the individual, therefore, to repay some of such debt through suitable charitable and philanthropic activities.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of the ancient Indian consciousness was to make us aware of our debt to the entire world of sub-human species—animals, birds, plants, trees, etc. We see from Kalidasa's pen-picture of the forest hermitage in which Shakuntala lived, about how affectionately she tended the plants and trees of the hermitage, how lovingly she looked after the forest creatures, and how tearfully she bade farewell to them before setting out on the journey towards her husband's place. Through such things as vows (*vratas*), ancient Indians taught even a little girl to ask a plant permission mentally before plucking its blossoms. Waxing eloquent over this aspect of the enlightened Indian consciousness, Sister Nivedita observes:

Great men work out knowledge, and give it to the community. Thus each civilisation becomes distinguished by its characteristic institutions. Nothing could be more perfect educationally than the *bratas* [sic] which

Hindu society has preserved and hands to its children in each generation, as first lessons in worship, so in the practice of social relationships or in manners. Some of these *bratas*—like that which touches the service of the cow, or the sowing of seeds, or some which seem to set out on the elements of geography and astronomy—have an air of desiring to impart what we now distinguish as secular knowledge.²

If we reflect deeply over the ancient Indian call to people to repay in some form or other their fivefold debts to society and humanity at large, we will see that the great purpose of the scheme was to so harmonize our rights and duties so as to ensure a meaningful living as a person-in-society. The scheme reflected a threefold value system for effecting a harmony between individual desires and social obligations—pleasure (*kāma*), wealth (*artha*), and righteousness (*dharma*), that lie in all duties done. Individuals were not excluded from the enjoyment of *artha* and *kāma* so long as their enjoyments were governed by *dharma*. The ideal was, 'It is through *dharma* that we should enjoy other things, *dharmād arthaśca kāmaśca*,' as the *Mahābhārata* phrased it, or 'Renounce to enjoy, *tena tyaktena bhuñjithāḥ*,' as the *Īśa Upaniṣad* put it. This was the ideal prescribed for householders. Total renunciation or *vairāgya* was for monastics.

In prescribing a threefold value system (*trivarga*, as *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*) for the householders, the *Mahābhārata* recognized two things: (a) that each individual has a hierarchy of values—the lower and the higher; and (b) that values are social norms or standards as well, determining an individual's motivation and behaviour from the point of view of what the community as a whole considers to be desirable for an individual and his society.

The first derivative from the above dictum, that the individual has a hierarchy of

values, finds support in biologist Julian Huxley's scientific analysis of values:

We find values, not merely emerging from the evolutionary process, but playing an active part in the latest phase. We know as an immediate and obvious fact that there are higher and lower values, we discover as a result of scientific analysis that there are more or less desirable and valuable directions in evolution.³

The second derivative from the above dictum, that values are social and cultural norms, is expressed by Leon, Broom, and Selznic:

A cultural value may be defined as a widely held belief or sentiment that some activities, relationships, feelings or goals are important to the community's identity or well being.⁴

The above two extracts show that modern researches reaffirm and vindicate the ancient Indian stand that values are individual oughts as well as social imperatives, and that the *Mahābhārata* dictum of *dharmād arthaśca kāmaśca* is as valid for modern times as it was during its promulgation.

The *Mahābhārata* and other ancient Indian texts say that if *artha* and *kāma* are pursued indiscriminately without holding on to *dharma*, we become slaves of our selfish desires. Being slaves of our desires, we modern people of today, as A.J.P. Taylor lamentably observes:⁵

...worship the Golden Calf—some because they possess it, the rest because they wish to do so. Comfort and enjoyment have become the only goals. Men hope to establish Heaven on Earth, and in a materialistic sense they may succeed. It is less likely that they will find it satisfactory.

2. Sister Nivedita, *Complete Works* (Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1968), Vol. 4, p. 400.

3. Julian Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 32.

4. Leon, Broom and Selznic, *Principles of Sociology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 54.

5. *Pears Cyclopaedia*, ed. L. Mary Barker, (1967-68 edition), p. x.

The *Mahābhārata* warned us thousands of years ago that the pursuit of comfort and enjoyment could not be the only goals of people. Their pursuit to the exclusion of dharma or social righteousness makes us tied to our lower self. It was the law of everyone's being to move from the lower to the higher, from the lower self to the higher Self. This higher purpose of life could be realized only by a harmonization of individual desires and social obligations, only by a continuous upward movement from selfishness to selflessness. As Michael Oakeshott puts it, each one must respond to this higher calling, 'a calling which beckons man to unfold his eternal and infinite self on the temporal and finite plane of thought and action.' Michael Oakeshott, who succeeded Harold Laski to the chair of political science in the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1951, believed that even politics was the pursuit of such higher calling of man, that political philosophy was 'the consideration of the relation between politics and eternity,' that philosophising about politics represented the attempt 'to see one particular mode of expression—practical experience—from the standpoint of the totality of experience,' that apart from the world of political activity there was 'another world,' that political scientists should direct their efforts towards finding 'the coherence of the two worlds together' and that 'politics is contributory to the fulfilment of an end which it cannot itself bring about.'

The other golden rule of life and living that the ancient Indian scriptures such as the *Bhagavadgītā* give us is: 'Your right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof; let not the fruit of action be your object, nor let your attachment be to inaction.'⁶ Again, 'The one pursuing karma yoga, rejecting the fruit of action, attains peace born of steadfastness; the one not pursuing karma yoga, led by desires, gets bound as he becomes attached to the fruit of actions.'⁷ This is karma yoga or the philoso-

phy of detached involvement in work. This philosophy was designed to bring about a harmony between our *being* and *doing*. It holds that life is action, being is doing, but being should issue in such doings that it becomes free from the bondage of doing. Bondage comes from anxiety and tensions over the result of doing. Results are not immaterial, but the point is, results come sooner or later to the one who works for it to the best of his ability, without being pre-conditioned and over-burdened by the stress arising out of worrying over the result. Sri Aurobindo used to say that if one were truly in a state of intensity of aspiration, there was not a circumstance which did not come to help him realize that aspiration. Swami Vivekananda said, 'That work alone brings non-attachment and bliss wherein we work as masters of our minds.'⁸

An approach to work as advocated in the ancient Indian work philosophy is perfectly in accord with the scientific theory of cause and effect. Good work, the cause, brings in its wake the effect in the form of success.

Gandhiji used to emphasize the distinction between needs and wants. The individual's needs, he held, were few but his demands were unlimited. Therefore we are faced with the danger of the demon of consumerism and over-consumption. In the face of such a danger it is time we realized the value of contentment. No amount of acquisition or consumption can make us satisfied unless we are contented and happy in ourselves.

The modern consumerist is like a lost sailor. He must know that his little self can be useful only when it is guided and activated by the higher Self. He needs a perspective of totality and holism of life to make his life worth living. The modern man wants, above all, progress. He needs to be told that he can be successful on an enduring basis only when he has the perspective of holism to prod him on. □

7. *Bhagavadgītā*, 5.12.

8. Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1989), Vol. 5, p. 241.

6. *Bhagavadgītā*, 2.47.

The Genesis of Juvenile Delinquency

DR S. DANDAPANI

Dr S. Dandapani is a professor in psychology from Mysore and the author of A Comprehensive Text Book of Advanced Studies in Educational Psychology. He presents a thorough study of the problem of child wrongdoing in this article.

From infancy to adulthood, human development is not a smooth journey. We have to encounter a number of developmental tasks characteristic of each stage, the successful accomplishment of which enables us to ascend and reach higher levels of maturity. Several agencies such as home, school, and community play their respective vital roles in assisting this process of growth. The process of change is so subtle and gradual that the individual is not aware of it. The distinguishing feature of human society is the impact of culture and civilization on it whereby the blind, passionate impulses of the newborn are transformed into sublime individuality. In the absence of this modification, humankind would remain at the primitive, beastly level.

Sigmund Freud, an eminent psychoanalyst, identifies three important levels in human development, namely the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. The Id represents one's passions, animal impulses, and urges characteristic of the infant stage. An infant seldom discriminates between good and bad, and never checks its impulses. As it grows and matures, contacts with the world of objects and persons restrain it from this uninhibited behaviour. The child comes to terms with reality and learns to curb its temptations. This heralds the emergence of the Ego. While the Id always operates on the 'pleasure principle,' the Ego is governed by the 'reality principle.' To assist the Ego-formation, parents prescribe certain codes of conduct; family members resent their violation. Gradually the individual learns to incorporate within his 'self' a series of do's and don'ts. This is the formation of conscience. Freud terms it as the

Superego. The Superego checks the impulses of the Id and by acting as a conscience-keeper, paves the way for the emergence of the Ego. With this background let us consider delinquent behaviour.

What is Delinquency?

Delinquency is an expression of aggression in a socially non-acceptable way. It is a kind of rebellion against the established social order. Society can survive and function smoothly only when all the members conform to the codes of conduct—written as well as unwritten. During the period of adolescence some individuals tend to view rules and regulations as an encroachment upon their freedom and liberty. They are prone to react violently, unmindful of the consequences of their actions. If an adult were to indulge in similar acts, he would be punishable by a court of law. Juvenile delinquents are young offenders, usually in their early teens, who are sent to a reformatory school for re-education and rehabilitation. To be able to understand the dynamics of delinquent behaviour, one has to probe the basic psychological needs of the individual and see whether these needs are adequately met or not.

One of the basic psychological needs that contributes towards the well-being of the individual is security. It is fostered by parents at home by proper upbringing. A child who is deprived of love and affection at home would feel insecure and is likely to carry over this feeling to the outside world. Case-studies of delinquent children reveal the fact that, by and large, they emerge from broken homes and unhappy families. What is significant in a bro-

ken home for the genesis of delinquency is not simply the fact of separation, desertion, divorce or remarriage of parents, but the conditions of neglect, poverty, and the tension accompanying such situations. Deprived of love and acceptance they tend to be suspicious of everyone in the world. They do not have a sense of belonging. They feel alienated not only from home but from society too!

Another vital need that promotes healthy development is freedom. One may be totally deprived of freedom or left free to behave in an unbridled manner. Alfred Adler, a disciple of Freud, says that parents can spoil a child either by granting unlimited freedom or by allowing very little of it. In the former case, children, having grown accustomed at home to behave as they like without any control whatsoever, would expect similar concession outside home as well. Lacking self-restraint, such children are likely to become rebellious and aggressive when things turn contrary to their whims and fancies. In the other extreme, children who are subjected to rigid control and deprived of even minimum basic freedom, tend to be inhibited not only at home but also outside. They would be suspicious, withdrawn and non-communicative. According to Adler, these 'styles of life' would remain throughout one's life and predispose an individual toward delinquent behaviour.

The need for status or recognition is another important factor in building up one's self-esteem. Every child, regardless of his accomplishments, craves for recognition. In various ways children strive to build up their self-image and status. In some families children are either ignored or unfavourably compared with the smarter ones from the neighbourhood. Consequently a negative self-image is developed, which might ultimately result in a feeling of despair and a sense of worthlessness. Having failed to obtain status and recognition at home, such children succumb to notorious, socially disapproved means. They tend to indulge in acts of violence and excitement so as to arrest the attention of

onlookers. Such exhibitionistic overtures turn out to be delinquent behaviours.

One of the manifestations of delinquent behaviour is truancy. A truant is one who runs away from school or absents himself from school habitually without permission. Truancy is a delinquent behaviour insofar as it represents a disregard of the main request which society makes of a child, namely school attendance. Children may resort to truancy in order to be able to enjoy their day-dreams which are interrupted at home and school. It is frequently the delinquent's first break with established family discipline and authority. Successful acts of truancy in the initial stages may encourage other violations of established rules with impunity.

Provocative movies and pornographic novels might spur an adolescent to indulge in something sensational and unconventional. Truancy may be an attempt to register one's resentment towards parents and teachers. The boy craves for emancipation and liberation from family bonds and rigid school schedules. It is most rampant in big cities where living accommodation is insufficient and wholesome recreational facilities are meagre. Increasing urbanization, break-up of family ties, overcrowding, inadequate play facilities, low morals exhibited in films and TV programmes, yellow journalism and, above all, the criminalization of politics lead to delinquent behaviour. Some of the factors arising out of home environment are over-protection, over-restriction, permissiveness, poor value system, broken families, alcoholic parents, gambling, size of the family, and poverty. Factors found in the school system include harsh, dictatorial teachers and headmaster; inflexible curriculum, cutthroat competition in class, inadequate co-curricular activities and poor teaching.

Delinquency is essentially a social malady. It is caused mainly by social conditions which thwart the satisfaction of the basic needs of the individual. No delinquent has a gene or a set of genes that prompt him to

commit an offence. The popular view to deal with crime has been to give the offender suitable punishment that would make him repent and see reason. Punishment only perpetuates the evil. The more rational and scientific approach to juvenile delinquency, therefore, is to reform the offender, to re-educate and rehabilitate him. People are less interested in attacking the problem of delinquency than in attacking the delinquent himself. Prescriptions for dealing with delinquency often seem

to be designed more for revenge than for prevention or reform.

Elizabeth Hurlock, a renowned authority on child psychology, suggests the following tips to deal with adolescents:

Couple a restriction with a privilege;
Couple a liberty with a responsibility;
Couple a compliment with a criticism;
and criticism with a compliment;
Link the adolescent's demands with his learning capacity. □

Are Some Children Really Worthless?

It is our nature to criticize children that they are stupid. But it is not men of genius who move the world and take the lead in it, so much as men of steadfastness, purpose, and indefatigable industry. Pietro di Cortona, the painter, was thought so stupid that he was nicknamed 'Ass's Head' when he was a boy. Newton, when at school, stood at the bottom of the lowest form but one. The boy above Newton having kicked him, the dunce showed his pluck by challenging him to fight, and beat him. Then he set to work with a will and determined also to vanquish his antagonist as a scholar, which he did, rising to the top of his class. Isaac Barrow, when a boy at the Charterhouse school, was notorious chiefly for his strong temper, antagonistic habits, and proverbial idleness as a scholar. He caused such grief to his parents that his father used to say that, if it pleased God to take from him any of his children, he hoped it might be Isaac, the least promising of them all. He later on went to become a great monk. The brilliant Sheridan showed so little capacity as a boy that he was presented to a tutor by his mother with the complimentary accompaniment that he was an incorrigible dunce. Walter Scott was all but a dunce when a boy. At the Edinburgh University, Professor Dalzell pronounced upon him the sentence that "Dunce he was, and dunce he would remain." Robert Clive was an idiot, if not a reprobate, when a youth. But he was always full of energy, even in badness. His family, glad to get rid of him, shipped him off to Madras; and he lived to lay the foundations of British power in India. Napoleon and Wellington were both dull boys, not distinguishing themselves in any way at school. Ulysses Grant, the Commander-in-Chief of the United States at one time, was called 'Useless Grant' by his mother: He was so dull and unhandy when a boy. Sir Humphry Davy, who was so brilliant in later years, was no cleverer than other boys. His teacher, Dr Cardew, once said of him: 'While he was with me I could not discern the faculties by which he was so much distinguished.'

The best culture is not obtained from teachers when at school or college, so much as by our own diligent self-education when we have become men. Hence parents need not be in too great a haste to see their children's talents forced into bloom. Let them watch and wait patiently. Let them see to it that the youth is provided, by free exercise of his bodily powers, with a full stock of physical health; set him fairly on the road of self-culture. As he grows older, if the right stuff is in him, he will effectively cultivate himself.

—retold from Samuel Smile's *Self Help*

The Meaning of Hinduism

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

We bring you the novel views of Mahatma Gandhiji on Hinduism. This was taken from a longer article Dagobert D. Runes's Treasury of Philosophy.

Let me for a few moments consider what Hinduism consists of, and what it is that has fired so many saints about whom we have historical record. Why has it contributed so many philosophers to the world? What is it in Hinduism that has so enthused its devotees for centuries? We have no simple *Kalema*, that we find in Islam, nor have we *John*, Chapters 3-16 of the Bible. Have we or have we not something that will answer that demands of the most philosophic among the Hindus or the most matter-of-fact among them? ... I have fixed upon one mantra that I am going to recite to you as containing the whole essence of Hinduism. Many of you, I think, know the *Ishopanishad*. I learnt it by heart in Yeravada Jail. But it did not then captivate me, as it has done during the past few months, and I have now come to the final conclusion that if all the Upanishads and all the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes, and if only the first verse in the *Ishopanishad* were left intact in the memory of Hindus, Hinduism would live for ever.

Now this mantra divides itself in four parts. The first part is: *All this that we see in this great Universe is pervaded by God*. Then come the second and third parts which read together, as I read them: I divide these into two and translate them thus: *Renounce it and enjoy it*. There is another rendering which means the same thing: *Enjoy what He gives you*. Even so you can divide it into two parts. Then follows the final and most important part, which means: *Do not covet anybody's wealth or possession*. All the other *mantras* of that ancient Upanishad are a commentary or an attempt to give us the full meaning of the first mantra. ... It seems to me

to satisfy the craving of the socialist and the communist. I venture to suggest to all who do not belong to the Hindu faith that it satisfies their cravings also. And if it is true—and I hold it to be true—you need not take anything in Hinduism which is inconsistent with or contrary to the meaning of this mantra. What more can a man in the street want to learn than this that the one God ... of all that lives pervades the universe? The three other parts of the mantra follow directly from the first. If you believe that God pervades everything that He has created you must believe that you cannot enjoy anything that is not given by Him. And seeing that He is the Creator of His numberless children, it follows that you cannot covet anybody's possession. If you think that you are one of His numerous creatures, it behoves you to renounce everything and lay it at His feet. That means the act of renunciation of everything is not a mere physical renunciation but represents a second or new birth. It is a deliberate act, not done in ignorance. It is therefore a regeneration. And then since he who holds the body must eat and drink and clothe himself, he must naturally seek all that he needs from Him. And he gets it as a natural reward of that renunciation. As if this was not enough the mantra closes with this magnificent thought: *Do not covet anybody's possession*. The moment you carry out these precepts, you become a wise citizen of the world, living at peace with all that lives. It satisfies one's highest aspirations on this earth and hereafter. No doubt it will not satisfy the aspirations of him who does not believe in God and His undisputed sovereignty. □

Salutations to Krishna!

NANDINI RAMANI

Sri Krishna's birth anniversary, Krishna Janmashtami, will be celebrated on the 23rd of this month. Smt Nandini Ramani, a well-known Sanskrit drama specialist from Chennai, presents a touching account of Krishna worship in the south.

'Make me your only refuge. I shall free you from all sins; don't grieve,' assures Sri Krishna, the darling of humanity, in the *Bhagavadgitā*. The worship of Krishna is unique in that contemplating his divine name or meditating on his greatness and qualities can never be repetitive. The adoration of this ever-joyful deity and the constant presence of his teachings pervade the lives of the Hindus. The universality of the worship of Krishna is yet another striking aspect of Krishna-bhakti.

The Krishna-theme is so close and dear to everyone. His teachings influence the daily life of every being at some point or other. Devotion to Krishna has become a way of life, be it in the north or the south of India.

In India, the tradition of bhakti and bhajana are part and parcel of human life. The varied religious festivals and observance of the birth of divinities bear a great significance to not only all the religious and spiritually-minded people but also for lay people. Krishna-bhakti has been cultivated by monks, saints and minstrels who have propagated this cult through their scholarly works, songs and expositions at different periods of time.

In the south of India, the worship of this celestial flautist is prevalent through song and dance rituals which have become a part of the ritualistic observance of the Janmashtami celebration of Sri Krishna. This is seen more

prominently in south Indian temples. Both Shaivas and Vaishnavas observe the birth of Krishna in the month of Śrāvaṇa with due festivities. However, the Vaishnavas celebrate Krishna's birth festival with much enthusiasm and devotion. Among the well-known temples, the temple of Sri Venkatesha near Tanjore celebrates the famed Varahur Uriyadi festival, which represents the enactment of Krishna stealing butter. A person tries to reach the top



of a slippery pole where a pot of curds and butter are tied. The difficult task of climbing the pole symbolizes the tough spiritual path ahead of the soul in reaching the Supreme. It was during the period of the Pallava kings that great saints and saint-singers like the Alvars composed the 'Four Thousand Divine Verses' (*Nālāyira Divya Prabandhams*) to propagate Krishna-bhakti.

Acharyas like Ramanuja and Nathamuni followed them. The male dancers or the *aryars* of Srirangam carry on the traditional exposition of the *Divya Prabandhams* in front of the Lord, enacting the glory of the all-pervasive presence of Lord Vishnu through their moving portrayals of the varied episodes of Krishna. They sing the *pāsurams* on specific occasions. They are considered the immediate messengers of the Lord, depicting the Almighty as the sole form of Purusha while according to tradition all other beings are said to worship Him assuming the feminine mode (*strī bhāva*).

The musical treasures of the south contain ample source material on Krishna-bhakti that are well known. The songs of Saint Tyagaraja, and the bhakti poetry of Sri Narayana Teertha in *Śrīkṛṣṇa-līlā-taraṅgiṇī* and so on are some of the outstanding examples of devotion to Krishna. The well known dance tradition, *Bhāgavata mela nāṭaka*, of some villages in Tanjore revolve around the glories of Sri Krishna. They are enacted annually as dance-dramas in front of the Sri Varadaraja temple at Melattur (Unnatapuri) by the male members of some brahmin families who are assigned with this 500-year old tradition.

The age-old tradition of *harikathā* expositions provide the inspiration needed to uplift human beings from their mundane bondages to the higher planes of spiritual glory. The *Bhagavadgītā*, with its descriptive narrations of the three yogas, the great epic *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāgavata*, *Śrīkṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* of Sage Suka, all centre around the sacred theme of Krishna. The *harikathā* exponents make use of these texts to enthrall the listeners. There is a saying that even if all the holy texts are lost, the *Gītā* alone will suffice to keep alive the spirit and glory of Hinduism. Such is the greatness of Sri Krishna's teachings.

The beauty of devotion to Krishna is that he appeals to each individual according to his or her mental state. Therefore the proponents of Krishna-bhakti offer a variety of paths to help aspirants of different classes.

There are nine stages of devotion to Krishna: Listening to God's glories (*śravaṇam*),

singing his praises (*kīrtanam*), remembering him (*smaraṇam*), serving him (*pāda sevānam*), worship (*arcanam*), saluting (*vandanam*), the attitude of a servant of God (*dāsyam*), friendship with him (*sakhyam*), and self-surrender (*ātma nivedanam*). The soul reaches spiritual culmination when the highest of the nine stages, *ātma nivedanam*, is reached. Then the aspirant is able to offer himself to God. This, in fact, is the ultimate teaching of the *Gītā* also. The Sri Vaishnava school has developed the path of *prapatti* or self-surrender to perfection, though it teaches both the paths—of bhakti and *prapatti*. The greatest bliss of human life is in realizing the most sacred knowledge of all—'That thou art'—which means the knowledge of the oneness of the soul and the Absolute. One who is immersed in the world of Krishna-bhakti experiences this joy of eternal bliss. The love of the lover and his beloved (*madhura bhakti*) as seen in the gopis, the love of the friend (*sakhyā bhakti*) as seen in Arjuna, the parental love (*vātsalya bhakti*) as seen in Periyalvar, or the servant attitude (*dāsyā bhakti*) as found in Hanuman—all reveal the same single path of devotion to and adoration of Krishna.

Krishna, the eternal teacher of the world, is an ever-inspiring ideal. He ensnares innumerable devout souls with his ever-magical, enchanting virtues of beauty, compassion, grace, etc. And he blesses his devotees instantly. Hence he is called the universal teacher—*jagadguru*. □

Swamiji Speaks of Krishna and Arjuna

Why is Sri Krishna goading Arjuna to fight? Because Arjuna's disinclination to fight did not arise out of the overwhelming predominance of pure sattva guna, but out of tamas. That he had the instinct and inclination to fight is proved by the simple fact that he came to the battlefield with no other purpose than that. Frequently in our lives also such things are seen to happen. Many people think they are Sattvika by nature, but they are really nothing but Tamasika. The Tamoguna loves very much to array itself in the garb of the Sattva. Here, in Arjuna, it has come under the guise of Daya (pity).

Break All Other Idols

SWAMI SATYAPRIYANANDA

The former editor of Prabuddha Bharata, Swami Satyapriyanandaji, is presently Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Chennai. In this article, he presents an interesting argument in favour of image worship.

Rakhal Chandra Ghosh (later Swami Brahmananda) had once to confront a predicament: how to avoid Narendranath Dutta, whom he loved much? After his primary education, Rakhal came to Calcutta in 1875 and got himself admitted into an English high school. It was in Calcutta that Rakhal came into contact with Narendranath whose dynamism and traits of leadership easily captivated the minds of other boys of his age. Rakhal, on the contrary, was meek, quiet and soft-natured. As a result, the bond of friendship between Narendranath and Rakhal became very strong. They underwent physical exercise in a common gymnasium along with other companions. One day Narendranath took Rakhal to the Brahmo Samaj where they promised not to worship any image.

Rakhal met Sri Ramakrishna shortly after this. Sri Ramakrishna recognized at first glance the innate devotional nature of Rakhal—the companion of Sri Krishna in a former birth and, in the present birth, his spiritual son whom the Divine Mother had, in a vision, placed on his lap. So, Sri Ramakrishna instructed him on the worship of God with form. Rakhal began to go to the temple with Sri Ramakrishna and bow down reverentially before the images there. Narendranath, who began visiting the place after some time, was shocked to see this. Had they not signed a pledge saying that they would not worship images? Narendranath, who was quite outspoken, reproved Rakhal for this, accusing him of being guilty of false conduct. Perhaps, Rakhal had his own reasons for bowing before images but he preferred to remain quiet and tried to avoid

meeting his very dear friend. Sri Ramakrishna, coming to know of this, set the matter right by explaining to Narendranath that it was not for everyone to begin spiritual life with the concept of God without form. It could well be argued that if God were all-pervading, did not that all-pervasiveness prevent one from excluding Him from the image and imply therefore that one could worship God in the image? There was validity in such an argument.

Coming to Narendranath, who was a highly qualified person in the field of spirituality, his problem was of another kind. Sri Ramakrishna, knowing the nature of Narendranath, wanted to infuse into him the truth of non-dualism and so he used to ask him to read books like the *Ashtavakra Samhita*. But these books were not liked by Narendranath who held that the truths described in that book amounted to atheism by equating the creature with the Creator using expressions such as 'I am He'. So Narendranath soon turned to be a strong opponent of non-dualism, and began to use even sarcastic words in his arguments. Sri Ramakrishna, who had the direct perception of the spiritual greatness of Narendranath, did not use argumentation to convince his favourite disciple.

One day Sri Ramakrishna spoke to Narendranath about the identity of Jiva and Brahman. At the end of the talk Narendranath went out and spoke to Hazra ridiculing these teachings in the words, 'Can it ever be possible that the water-pot is God, the cup is God, whatever we see and all of us are God?' There was loud laughter in the wake of such talk and Sri Ramakrishna, in a state of partial con-

sciousness, came out and asked them with a delightful smile on his face, 'What are you talking about?' Saying so he touched Narendranath and went into ecstasy. What followed was the immediate experience of that truth by Narendranath, an experience which takes one many lifetimes to gain. Narendranath clearly saw that 'there was nothing in the whole universe except God.' That divine inebriation continued for the whole day! He was free from the body idea and had no urge to take food even. What he saw outside of him seemed to him to be the very thing that was within him. There was no sense of the other. Such a state continued until one day the overwhelming intoxication diminished a little and 'the world appeared to be a dream.' In dream one perceives objects but there is also a lingering doubt regarding the reality of the perceived objects. Going for a walk on the bank of the Hedua tank, he would knock his head against the iron railings round it to see if they were part of a dream or real! When in due course he became 'normal', he saw the world as it is usually seen by all of us but the conviction became unshaken in Narendranath that what the ancient seers had uttered regarding the ultimate Truth were all true and experiential. The world is like a mirage, appearing real as long as it is not recognized as a mirage. Thus, not through argumentation but by granting the ultimate experience by a touch did Sri Ramakrishna demonstrate to Narendranath the scriptural conclusions on the non-dual viewpoint.

Sri Ramakrishna had also to teach Narendranath the ultimate truth in its widest sense: that it was not possible to place a limit to God's manifestation, that He was formless, again with form, and beyond form and formlessness. He was yet to teach Narendranath that the infinite ocean of Satchidananda, on account of the cooling influence of the devotion of the devotee, assumes forms, like water becoming ice; that with the rise of the sun of Knowledge, the ice melts into water again, that God with form melts into the formless;

that there are places where the ice never melts, the forms of God being eternal.

We have seen above that Narendranath too had signed the pledge not to worship images of deities. And naturally he had in him the combined feeling of reverence and love for the love, saintliness and spiritual power of Sri Ramakrishna on the one hand, and a sense of dismay that Sri Ramakrishna still worshipped images. It is a part of recorded history how the pecuniary condition of his family consequent on the sudden demise of his father forced Narendranath to approach Sri Ramakrishna to pray to 'his' Mother on his behalf, and how Sri Ramakrishna used this opportunity to establish a rapport between the Divine Mother and Her gifted son. Thus did Sri Ramakrishna give to Narendranath a taste of the all-pervading Reality manifesting vividly in and through an image three cubits tall! Narendranath had thus the first-hand experience of: (i) the all-pervading Reality spoken of in the scriptures and realized by the rishis of the past in the inner recesses of their hearts, and (ii) of the divine form of Mother Kali whose incomparable beauty, grace and compassion have been eulogized by mystics and devotees through hymns, songs and lyrics, rich in content and capable of elevating the believer to a high spiritual plane.

We must now turn our attention to another personality who has well tried to keep himself hidden in the pages of the *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita*. Mahendranath Gupta (M.) too had some misconceptions regarding image worship. We find him arguing with Sri Ramakrishna during his early visits saying, '...suppose one believes in God with form. Certainly He is not the clay image!' Sri Ramakrishna corrects him saying, 'But why clay? It is an image of Spirit.' Not clear what Sri Ramakrishna was meaning, M. continued his argument, '...one should explain to those who worship the clay image that it is *not* God, and that, while worshipping it, they should have God in view and not the clay image. One should not worship clay.' After a sharp admo-

dition, Sri Ramakrishna explains that the Lord of the universe is the only teacher and that He will show people the way to worship Him because He is the inner guide. A little later Sri Ramakrishna discusses the theme completely saying, 'Even if the image is made of clay, there is need for that sort of worship. God Himself has provided different forms of worship. He who is the Lord of the Universe has arranged all these forms to suit different men in different stages of knowledge.'

The real thing is to fix the mind on God. This point being settled, men and women can choose any method that suits their taste and temperament. The scope of spiritual practice is that wide and deep: repeat God's name, sing His glories, keep holy company, visit God's devotees, meditate in solitude or in a forest or in a corner, discriminate between the Real and the unreal, do all the work keeping the mind on God.... Set up in the mind an association that points always to God. In Swamiji's language, strive to manifest divinity in every movement of life, and in this process, any aid that is helpful to a particular individual may be taken.

Taken to its logical conclusion, the entire world (*virat*) is the symbol of God; in its limited view, every unit of this world too reflects His glory and is a pointer to Him. What we have to do is to set up that pointer-pointee relation so that in whatever direction we glance, we see God and God alone.

One of the primary helps for a beginner is the image of God or the pictures of saints. In the image or in the picture the devotee sees manifest his ideal. It is that ideal as present in the aspirant that the aspirant meditates on. The external object is merely an aid. On how deep this relation between the sign and the signified is, we have an interesting incident in the life of Swami Vivekananda. It was the Maharaja of Alwar, Mangal Singhji, who told Swamiji about his disbelief in the worship of images. Pointing to a picture of the Maharaja hanging on the wall, Swamiji asked the Dewan who was present there, whose picture it was. On

being replied that it was the likeness of the Maharaja, Swamiji commanded the Dewan to spit on it. To a shocked audience, Swamiji gave his invitation that any one present there may just spit on what was but a piece of paper. Surely, there could be no objection to that! Everyone was thunderstruck, but the Maharaja understood. Swamiji explained that everyone saw in the photo the shadow of their master, the king himself, and therefore an insult to the photo would be an insult to the king. 'It is a shadow of you; it brings you into their minds. One glance at it makes them see you in it; therefore, they look at it with as much respect as they would have in looking at your own person.' Thus did Swamiji explain the significance of the worship of images [*The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. 1, pp. 268-70].

This association is existent in human minds. It has its good and bad aspects.

I should like to have two pictures. One of a yogi seated before a lighted log, and another of a yogi smoking hemp and the charcoal blazing up as he pulls. Such pictures kindle my spiritual consciousness, as an imitation fruit awakens the idea of a real one [*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 401].

Divine feeling is awakened through such pictures (referring to the pictures of holy men) [*Gospel*, p. 402].

It is true that one's spiritual feelings are awakened by looking at the picture of a sādhu. It is like being reminded of the custard-apple by looking at an imitation one, or like stimulating the desire for enjoyment by looking at a young woman. Therefore I tell you that you should constantly live in the company of holy men [*Gospel*, p. 431].

The Master sat in silence before them (the devotees), now and then casting a glance at the walls, where many pictures were hanging.... Suddenly Sri Ramakrishna turned to M. and said: 'You see, it is good to keep pictures of sannyasins and holy men in one's room. When you get up in the morning you should see the faces of holy persons rather than of other men. Peo-

ple with rājasic qualities keep 'English' pictures on their walls—pictures of rich men, the King, the Queen, the Prince of Wales, and white men and women walking together. That shows their rājasic temperament.

You acquire the nature of the people whose company you keep. Therefore even pictures may prove harmful. Again, a man seeks the company that agrees with his own nature. The paramahamsas keep near them a few young boys five or six years old. They allow such boys to be near them. Attaining the state of a paramahamsa, a man loves the company of boys. Like the paramahamsa, the boys are not under the control of the gunas—sattva, rajas, or tamas.

By looking at trees a man awakens in his heart the picture of a hermitage in which a rishi is practising austerity [*Gospel*, p. 606]. It is interesting to note in the above citations that not merely images, even people and books, are company that awaken by association a train of thoughts in the mind of the aspirant. These are external props that help fix the mind on God. As with every prop, the emphasis is not on the prop but on what the prop is intended to provide—a support for young, unprepared minds.

Swamiji was sometimes full of praise for the worship of images, especially if through that one could produce a Ramakrishna. Yet at other times he was equally aware that image worship seldom manufactured a Ramakrishna; on the other hand, it produced men of fanatical temperament eulogizing their own images and decrying all other images. Worship of the images of our religion is perfectly in order, they would say, but the images of your religion are but idols!

We must note that Sri Ramakrishna too performed image worship, but his worship was of a unique kind. Sometimes the flowers would be offered to the Deity, sometimes on his own person [*Gospel*, p. 187]. Sometimes food offerings were given to the Deity, at other

times the recipient could well be a cat; there would well sometimes the question, Mother should I eat first and then You? What would amount to sacrilege, was a perfectly accepted form of worship, for indeed Sri Ramakrishna perceived the Mother as pervading all existence. Within himself Sri Ramakrishna perceived two persons: one the devotee and the other the Divine Mother. His worship of the Divine Mother took different forms. We refer to the worship of the Shodashi in the person of the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi. Sri Ramakrishna's advice to the Holy Mother to give the bangles offered during the said worship to her mother-in-law looking upon her as the Divine Mother is instructive of the outlook one should have upon all. Sri Ramakrishna accepted the worship of the Divine Mother by his devotees in his own person on the night of the Kali Puja. So, in and through worship of images, what shone brilliantly in his life was his worship of the Divine Presence in Its manifold forms.

In the vast majority of cases, this insight is lost sight of. Swamiji therefore looked upon this dualistic mode of worship as weakening in the final analysis. Says Swami Vivekananda [*The Complete Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 140–1]:

Sometimes I agree that there is some good in the dualistic method: it helps many who are weak. If a man wants you to show him the polar star, you first point out to him a bright star near it, then a less bright star, then a dim star, and then the polar star. This process makes it easy for him to see it. ... But then I think of the other side. How long will the world have to wait to reach the truth if it follows this slow, gradual process? How long? And where is the surety that it will ever succeed to any appreciable degree? It has not so far. After all, gradual or not gradual, easy or not easy to the weak, is not the dualistic method based on falsehood? Are not all the prevalent religious practices often weakening and therefore wrong? They are based on a wrong idea, a wrong view of man. Would

two wrongs make one right? Would the lie become truth? Would darkness become light?

I am the servant of a man who has passed away. I am only the messenger. I want to make the experiment. The teachings of Vedanta I have told you about were never really experimented with before. Although Vedanta is the oldest philosophy in the world, it has always become mixed up with superstitions and everything else. ... For thousands of years millions and millions all over the world have been taught to worship the Lord of the world, the Incarnations, the saviours, the prophets. They have been taught to consider themselves helpless, miserable creatures and to depend upon the mercy of some person or persons for salvation. There are no doubt many

marvellous things in such beliefs. But even at their best, they are but kindergartens of religion, and they have helped but little. Men are still hypnotised into abject degradation. However, there are some strong souls who get over that illusion. The hour comes when great men shall arise and cast off these kindergartens of religion and shall make vivid and powerful the true religion, the worship of the spirit by the spirit.

It was with an idea to perform this experiment that Swamiji set up the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati. In the prospectus of the Ashrama, he outlines this as the central purpose in setting up the Ashrama: '...to keep Advaita free from all superstitions and weakening contaminations. Here will be taught and practised nothing but the Doctrine of Unity, pure and simple...' (*Complete Works*, Vol. 5, p. 436). □

Swami Vivekananda on Jnana Yoga

The word *Jnana* means knowledge. It is derived from the root *Jna*—to know—the same word from which your English word *to know* is derived. Jnana-Yoga is Yoga by means of knowledge. What is the object of the Jnana-Yoga? Freedom. Freedom from what? Freedom from our imperfections, freedom from the misery of life. Why are we miserable? We are miserable because we are bound. What is the bondage? The bondage is of nature. Who is it that binds us? We, ourselves. Now this bondage in which we are is a fact. It need not be proved that we are in bondage. When we have any desire and not the means of fulfilling it, we get that peculiar reaction called misery. Who is the cause of desire? I, myself. Therefore, I myself am the cause of all the miseries I am in. The whole gist of Jnana-Yoga is to show humanity the method of undoing this Karma. Man is not wicked by his own nature—not at all. His nature is pure, perfectly holy. Each man is divine. Each man that you see is a God by his very nature. This nature is covered by ignorance, and it is ignorance that binds us down. Ignorance is the cause of all misery. Ignorance is the cause of all wickedness; and knowledge will make the world good. Knowledge will remove all misery. Knowledge will make us free. What knowledge? Chemistry? Physics? Astronomy? Geology? They help us a little, just a little. But the chief knowledge is that of your own nature. "Know thyself." You must know what you are, what your real nature is. You must become conscious of that infinite nature within. Then your bondages will burst. How to know ourselves? the question remains now. There are various ways to know this Self, but in Jnana-Yoga it takes the help of nothing but sheer intellectual reasoning. ... When you have realized the misery of this physical existence, when you become convinced that such a life is not worth living, you have made the first step towards Jnana.

Earth and Water

SISTER NIVEDITA

Here is a remarkable poem from Nivedita on India, originally published in the Modern Review (1921). It is being reproduced from Sister Nivedita's Lectures and Writings.

Earth of India! Altar of Gods,
Footway of our saints,
Foundation of our homes,
Dust of our heroes!

You, the Indian waters,
Vahana of the lotus,
Fountain of joy and coolness,
Symbol of all purity,
Consecration of the temple
And extinguisher of the last dread fire!

India whose sky is temple-dome,
Whose mountains are her pillars,
Whose forests make offerings, whom streams love
And the South wind fans,
In these we worship—Earth and Water!

The cry of the cattle
Of the parched rice-fields
Of the river and the land. Return! Return!
The blessing of the grass: Be strong, be strong!

Be patient and endure!
The blessing of the palms: Put on thy crown!
Lift high thy thoughts!
Dream lofty dreams!

O Ye whose hope is in your land,
and your land's hope in you!
And all the Nation answers: We are One!



RELIGION AND LIFE

Swami Bhuteshanandaji's Answers to Questions

The questions and answers being serialized in these columns are not meant to be scholarly expositions of various issues. People from different walks of life used to meet Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj daily during his tenure as President of the Ramakrishna Order, and discuss with him their problems and doubts; and Revered Maharaj would clear their doubts in a characteristically simple way. These questions and answers were recorded and read out to him before he approved them all for publication.

How to progress rapidly along the spiritual path?

Rapid progress is possible only when you feel earnest longing for God. You can also progress by repeating His name, by regular contact with His devotees, and by constantly meditating on Him.

What should we understand by holy company?

If a few like-minded people come together, discuss higher things, read spiritual works, etc, it becomes *satsaṅga* or holy company. In spiritual life, we should help one another as far as possible. This calls for company of devotees. We should seek holy company and the company of devotees. We should repeat His name as much as we can.

Is it good to see gods, monastics, etc in dream?

Yes, it is. If someone sees a god or goddess, guru, sadhu, etc, it will create a good effect (*saṁskāra*) on the mind and it will affect the *buddhi*. We can't say whether that dream itself is real but its effect is real. Sri Ramakrishna says, 'A man dreamt of a tiger. Then he woke up and his dream vanished. But his heart continued to palpitate' [*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 854]. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.3.20] there is mention of such a situation. Just as palpitation continues even after you wake up from seeing the dream of a tiger, pondering over good dreams will bring

happiness to the mind. Sri Ramakrishna has said that seeing God or holy persons in dreams is good and propitious. The good *saṁskāras* that such dreams create will help sometime later.

Yathādarśe tathātmāni yathā svapne tathā pitrloke; yathāpsu pariva dadṛśe tathā gandharvaloke chāyātapayoriva brahmaloke, says the *Kāthopanīṣad* [2.3.5]. The meaning of this verse is: In this world one can see the Self as in a mirror in the intellect when it is purified. In the world of manes, it is hazy, like seeing something in a dream, or like reminiscence. In a still higher world, the world of the *gandharvas*, the Self can be seen only as the reflection seen in rippling waters. In the world of Brahma, the Self can be seen as clearly as light and shade. Thus what is seen in a dream is not final. Practically speaking, we shall have to form some idea of God, like He possesses all the noble qualities we can conceive of. And it is through these noble tendencies that finally the vision of God is possible. When there is no scope at all for any doubt, the mind is called pure mind and pure intellect. It is in this state that Reality can be perceived with clarity. Sri Ramakrishna gives the example of a cockroach. When the cockroach meditates constantly on the *kumīra* worm, it becomes motionless; it loses the power to move. Similarly, one acquires the qualities of the person about whom he or she thinks constantly. He who thinks of God constantly acquires His qualities.

What is the meaning of turiya?

Turiya signifies the fourth state, of being beyond the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep.

Fish are caught in the net. Many fish try to come out of the net but they cannot. Why is it so?

There are barriers and the barriers are of the mind. All are in bondage. There are endeavours to be free. But the difficulty is lack of intensity. Perhaps the fisherman would himself let the struggling fish out of the net. The latent tendencies influence us to be in bondage.

If he so desires, how can a householder lead the life of a sannyāsi?

Sannyāsa means renunciation. A householder should renounce mentally. Sri Ramakrishna says that there is no need for a householder to renounce the world. He advises that the householder should renounce mentally and compares the householder's struggle for higher life to fighting from inside a fort.

Even though we pray to God so much, He does not listen. What are we to do?

We must surrender completely at His feet. We should place all our responsibilities on His shoulders once we come to know we cannot do anything. There should be active surrender, not passive surrender. Women especially complain often that they have innumerable household duties to perform; how can they repeat God's names? My reply to them is, how is it that you have all the time in the world for household work but not even a little time for praying to God? It is said in the *Gītā* [3.5]:

*Nahi kaścit kṣaṇamapi
jātu tiṣṭhatyakarmakṛt;
Kāryate hyavaśaḥ karma
sarvaḥ prakṛtīḥairguṇaiḥ.*

Human beings cannot remain inactive even for a moment. Everyone works according to

the laws of nature. Nature will compel us to do what may not be to our liking.

What should we seek from God?

Sri Ramakrishna has repeatedly said that you should seek devotion and faith from Him, and also all other virtues that orient us towards Him. We must pray for devotion and faith. Let us not pray for anything that takes us away from Him.

Is it beneficial to read holy books?

What will mere reading accomplish? But read only that which can be utilized for higher purposes in your life. If you can apply even a single good teaching in life, that is good. There is a couplet in Hindi which says that one does not become a pundit even though he studies all the books in the world. However, by just reading the word *prem* (love), of just two-and-a-half letters (in the Devanagari script), one becomes a scholar. Too much of reading will not bring anything; it may only help to show off our erudition before others. Our scriptures themselves forbid reading too many scriptures because this clouds the mind. When I was in Shillong, someone introduced a person to me and said that the man was in the habit of listening to discourses at five places daily. It immediately occurred to me, how hollow this person could be. Whatever enters into his head from one ear goes away through the other. If one does a lot of sadhana, the ego that 'I am a sadhaka' or that 'I perform a lot of japa' will go. This will help spiritual progress in its turn.

It is mentioned in the Gītā that God alone is our mother, father, and everything else. Yet, why do we not feel attracted towards Him in the natural course of events?

How can you feel the attraction when you have not even seen Him or experienced Him? If you never saw your parents, would you regard them as your very own?

—compiled by *Smt Manju Nandi Mazumdar*

Retrospect

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL (Æ)

Here is a remarkable mystical writing by the famous Irish mystic and poet G.W. Russell (1867-1935), whose pseudonym was Æ. This article, selected from the author's famous book Candle of Vision, was published in Message of the East (February 1936).

I had travelled all day and was tired, but I could not rest by the hearth in the cottage on the hill. My heart was beating with too great an excitement. After my year in the city I felt like a child who wickedly stays from home through a long day, and who returns frightened and penitent at nightfall, wondering whether it will be received with forgiveness by its mother. Would the Mother of us all receive me again as one of her children? Would the winds with wandering voices be as before the evangelists of her love? Or would I feel like an outcast amid the mountains, the dark valleys, and the shining lakes?

I knew if benediction came how it would come. I would sit among the rocks with shut eyes, waiting humbly as one who waits in the antechambers of the mighty, and if the invisible ones chose me as companion, they would begin with a soft breathing of their intimacies, creeping on me with shadowy affection, like children who steal nigh to the bowed head and suddenly whisper fondness in the ear before it has even heard a footfall.

So I stole out of the cottage and over the dark ridges to the place of rocks, and sat down, and let the coolness of the night chill and still the fiery dust in the brain. I waited trembling for the faintest touch, the shyest breathing of the Everlasting within my soul, the sign of reception and forgiveness. I knew it would come. I could not so desire what was not my own, and what is our own we cannot lose. Desire is hidden identity.

The darkness drew me heavenward. From the hill the plains beneath slipped away, grown vast and vague, remote and still. I

seemed alone with immensity, and there came at last that melting of the divine darkness into the life within me for which I prayed. Yes, I still belonged, however humbly, to the heavenly household. I was not outcast. Still though by a thread fine as that by which a spider hangs from the rafters, my being was suspended from the habitations of eternity. I longed to throw my arms about the hills, to meet with kisses the lips of the seraph wind. I felt the gaiety of childhood springing up through weariness and age, for to come into contact with that which is eternally young is to have that childhood of the spirit it must attain ere it can be moulded by the Magician of the Beautiful and enter the House of Many Mansions.

I had not always this intimacy with nature. I never felt a light in childhood which faded in manhood into the common light of day, nor do I believe that childhood is any nearer than age to this being. If it were so, what would the spirit have to hope for after youth was gone? I was not conscious in my boyhood of any heaven lying about me. I lived in the city, and the hills from which aid was to come to me were only a far flush of blue on the horizon. Yet I was drawn to them, and as years passed and legs grew longer, I came nearer until at last one day I found myself on the green hillside. I came to play with other boys, but years were yet to pass before the familiar places grew strange once more and the mountains dense with fiery forms and awful as Sinai.

While the child is still in its mother's arms it is nourished by her, yet it does not know it is a mother which feeds it. It knows later in whose bosom it has lain. As the mother nour-

ishes the body, so the Mighty Mother nourishes the soul. Yet there are but few who pay reverence where reverence is due, and that is because this benign deity is like a mother who indulges the fancies of her children. With some she imparts life to their own thoughts. Others she endows with the vision of her own heart. Even of these last, some love in silence, being afraid to speak of the majesty which smiled on them, and others deceived think with pride: 'This vision is my own.'

I was like these last for a long time. I was aged about sixteen or seventeen years, when I, the slackest and least ideal of boys, with my life already made dark by those desires of body and heart with which we so soon learn to taint our youth, became aware of a mysterious life quickening within my life. Looking back, I know not of anything in friendship, anything I had read, to call this forth. It was, I thought, self-begotten. I began to be astonished with myself, for, walking along country roads, intense and passionate imaginations of another world, of an interior nature, began to overpower me. They were like strangers who suddenly enter a house, who brush aside the doorkeeper, and who will not be denied. Soon I knew they were the rightful owners and heirs of the house of the body, and the doorkeeper was only one who was for a time in charge, who had neglected his duty, and who had pretended to ownership. The boy who existed before was an alien. He hid himself when the pilgrim of eternity took up his abode in the dwelling. Yet, whenever the true owner was absent, the sly creature reappeared and boasted himself as master once more.

That being from a distant country who took possession of the house began to speak in a language difficult to translate. I was tormented by limitations of understanding. Somewhere about me I knew there were comrades who were speaking to me, but I could not know what they said. As I walked in the evening down the lanes scented by the honey-suckle, my senses were expectant of some un-

veiling about to take place, I felt that beings were looking in upon me out of the true home of man. They seemed to be saying to each other of us, 'Soon they will awaken; soon they will come to us again,' and for a moment I almost seemed to mix with their eternity. The tinted air glowed before me with intelligible significance, like a face, a voice. The visible world became like a tapestry blown and stirred by winds behind it. If it would but raise for an instant I knew I would be in Paradise. Every form on that tapestry appeared to be the work of gods. Every flower was a word, a thought. The grass was speech; the trees were speech; the waters were speech; the winds were speech. They were the Army of the Voice marching on to conquest and dominion over the spirit; and I listened with my whole being and then these apparitions would fade away, and I would be the mean and miserable boy once more. So might one have felt who had been servant of the prophet, and had seen him got up in the fiery chariot, and the world had no more light or certitude in it with that passing. I knew these visitations for what they were, and named them truly in my fantasy, for writing then in the first verses of mine, which still seem to me to be poetry, I said of the earth that we and all things were her dreams:

She is rapt in dreams divine

As her clouds of beauty pass.

On our glowing hearts they shine,

Mirrored there as in a glass.

Earth, whose dreams are we and they,

With her deep heart's gladness fills

All our human lips can say

Or the dawn-fired singer trills.

Yet such is human nature that I still felt vanity, as if this vision was mine, and I acted like one who comes across the treasure-house of a king, and spends the treasure as if it were his own. We may indeed have a personal wisdom, but spiritual vision is not to speak of as ours any more than we can say at the rising of the sun: 'This glory is mine.' By the sudden uprising of such vanities in the midst of vision I was often outcast, and found myself in an

instant like those warriors of Irish legend, who had come upon a lordly house and feasted there and slept, and when they woke they were on the barren hillside, and the Faed Fia was drawn about that lordly house. Yet though the imagination apprehended truly that this beauty was not mine, and hailed it by its heavenly name, for some years my heart was proud, for as the beauty sank into memory, it seemed to become a personal possession, and I said, 'I imagined this,' when I should humbly have said, 'The curtain was a little lifted that I might see.' But the day was to come when I could not deny the Mighty Mother the reverence due, when I was indeed to know by what being I had been nourished, and to be made sweet and mad as a lover with a consciousness of her intermingling spirit.

The sages of old found that at the close of intense meditation their being was drawn into union with that which they contemplated. All desire tends to bring about unity with the object adored, and this is no less true of spiritual and elemental than of bodily desire; and I, with my imagination more and more drawn to adore an ideal nature, was tending to that vital contact in which what at first was apprehended in fantasy would become the most real of all things. When that certitude came I felt as

Dante might have felt after conceiving of Beatrice close at his side and in the Happy World, if, after believing it a dream, half hoping that it might hereafter be a reality, that beloved face before his imagination grew suddenly intense, vivid and splendidly shining, and he knew beyond all doubt that her spirit was truly in that form, and had descended to dwell in it, and would be with him forever more. So did I feel one warm summer day, lying idly on the hillside, not then thinking of anything but the sunlight, and how sweet it was to drowse there, when, suddenly, I felt a fiery heart throb, and knew it was personal and intimate, and started with every sense dilated and intent, and turned inwards, and I heard first a music as of bells going away, away into that wondrous underland whither, as legend relates, the Danaan gods withdrew; and then the heart of the hills was opened to me, and I knew there was no hill for those who were there, and they were unconscious of the ponderous mountain piled above the palaces of light, and the winds were sparkling and diamond clear, yet full of colour as an opal, as they glittered through the valley, and I knew the Golden Age was all about me, and it was we who had been blind to it, but that it had never passed away from the world. □

The True Lover of God

A fierce Mahomedan warrior went to a garden to pray. In the same garden a girl had appointed to meet her lover. The warrior lay prostrate on his face according to the prescribed form of his religion. At that moment the girl espied her lover, and with joy rushing to meet him, trod upon the prostrate form. He jumped up and laying hand upon his sword would have slain the girl. 'How dare you,' cried he, 'vile wench, disturb my worship, my devotion to God, with your base feet?' 'Worship! Devotion!' cried the girl, 'you do not know what they are. You had no devotion, lying there, no spirit of worship. If I, a timid girl, could so forget the presence of an object of dread like you, in my worship and devotion to my earthly lover as to tread upon you and not even know of it, how much more should you, if your heart had been absorbed in love and devotion to God, have been ignorant that I touched you?' The warrior was humbled and appeased and went away.

—Swami Vivekananda

The Concept of 'Realization' Re-examined

PROF MARGARET CHATTERJEE

Prof Margaret Chatterjee is professor of philosophy at Westminster College, Oxford University. Her scholarly analysis of 'realization' was presented at the 'East and West: Concepts of Knowledge' conference held at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, in 1995.

In the modern era, epistemologists have by and large assumed that to cognize involves: (a) objectivity, and (b) distinctness from the affective and the volitional. Even where subjective conditions of a theoretical kind (cf. Kantian conceptual frameworks or theoretical constructs as found in the sciences) are deemed indispensable to knowledge they are deemed such in virtue of their being presuppositions of objectivity. The two considerations are interconnected in that feeling and willing are taken to detract from objectivity or, the stronger case, are irrelevant to it. It is not difficult to see how such a view of cognition detaches epistemology from ontology, to say nothing of detaching it from aesthetics or ethics. That scientific knowledge requires a bracketing out of the personal equation may almost seem a commonplace even though personal records of scientists concerning their work in process would suggest that discovery is by no means cut loose from its matrix, which in turn accommodates much that is not strictly cognitive. Even to say this makes clear the view that epistemology customarily sets its sights on the end term of cognitive processes rather than on those processes themselves. Such a line of thinking runs through the whole project of demarcating psychology from epistemology which eventually led to the capture of the cognitive enquiry by linguistic analysis, something which, to my mind, amounted to a virtual departure from the analysis of cognition *per se*. Of course there is a sense in which analysis of cognition is self-defeating, for to question what it is to know leads to an infinite

regress. No matter how many grounds or warrants be trotted out there is an inbuilt gap between these and the intuitive insight that provides the terminus *ad quem*. Even those who make much of the contrast between belief and knowledge might concede this.

But what if there be a mode of cognition which is not hamstrung by our two initial considerations, one in which objectivity is not the be all and end all and in which feeling and willing are intimately bound up with knowing? Indeed there seems to be not one such mode of cognition but several such. Traditional demarcations between branches of philosophy should not hold us up at this point. We do in fact speak of knowing what we ought to do even though there may be situations where it takes much time and thought to determine it. We similarly speak of knowing one activity to be more worthy than another (cf. helping someone in distress *vis-a-vis* an act of self-indulgence). Even if such judgements may not be free of cultural filters this does not invalidate the use of the term 'know' with reference to them. Polanyi in his book *Personal Knowledge* provides a host of examples of situations in which it would be Pickwickian to deny that human beings were knowing in some sense or other. One qualm about such cases can be stilled. In such examples the possibility of being mistaken is not ruled out.¹ On the contrary what comes into play is a process of self-correction at which most people of

1. Some of these are set out in my *The Concept of Spirituality* (Allied Publishers, 1989), p. 113.

standard endowments are quite adept. In fact our ability to comport ourselves in situations of great variety brings into play knowledge of a fine-grained kind whether this be recognized by philosophers or not.

Let us take a different sort of example. X says to you, 'You know you are always welcome whenever you care to come round.' While in English it would be natural to use the word *know*, the same meaning could be conveyed in Bengali without using it. Such is the genius of each language. My point is that although we are no doubt referring to knowledge it would be pedantic and perhaps artificial to speak of cognition *simpliciter* in this case. How would one set about unpacking the sentence? No doubt the speaker and the addressee find themselves in a situation which in turn is part of a shared life-world. Without this (say, to someone distributing pamphlets or selling washing powder) the occasion for saying anything of the kind would not arise. The addressee does not make a telescoped induction on the basis of previous experience in order to verify what is said. The point of reference is really the shared life-world of the two friends which 'makes sense of' the locution. Let us make the case a little more elaborate. Objectively speaking there might be grounds for doubting the welcome if one so wills. X does not stop what he or she is doing when Y arrives—the food has to be cooked or proofs corrected to catch the post, the phone call continued or whatever. It is the shared world with all its multitude of significations that gives Y confidence in his or her present and future welcome. So the apparent discourtesy of X's continuing with whatever he or she was doing when Y arrived is in fact *not* taken as a ground for doubting the welcome. It may quite possibly provide evidence of the strength of the relationship and so X may say 'You don't mind if I finish this, do you?' I would sum the situation up by saying that Y's understanding of the original sentence: 'You know you are always welcome whenever you care to come round,' is based on the *relationship* which both

have jointly built and in which the notion of grounds is somehow alien or at least *de trop*.

II

In the foregoing I have not done more than prepare the ground for an approach which would extend the range of applicability of the word *cognition* beyond its usual usages in epistemology and, in particular, free it from any necessary connection with theories about the conditions of objectivity. The use made by certain Indian philosophers at the turn of the century of the terms *realization* and *self-realization* is worth looking into in this connection, it seems to me. Discussion of these terms has, as far as I can make out, been accommodated for the most part in discourses about religion, more especially mysticism, or—a more minimal treatment—under 'intuition'. On investigation, however, the idea, although not the terms, trails a longer lineage. This includes the conception of *adhikāra* or eligibility to know, carrying as this does the implications of the relevant instruction and discipline, and the accompanying caveat that the cultivation of certain powers requires the curbing of others. This latter point, *inter alia*, seems to be based on common sense. For example, the preoccupations of the householder preclude *tapasyā* of a meditative kind.

The words *realization* and *self-realization* were frequently used in the nineteenth century, especially in Bengal, and, as far as I am able to judge, entered philosophical discourse through British idealism without directly tapping the original German source from which this in turn was derived.² At about the same time the word *spirit* came into circulation, likewise losing its diverse moorings in Western

2. I take this to be distinguishable from the *augmentation* of cognitive faculties through theurgic (*alaukika*) means. And yet the association of special cognitive capacity with *powers* (usually of an esoteric kind) has been a feature of many cultures. The association of scientific knowledge with *power* is after all a kind of secularized form of this.

thought, including both its Greek and German roots. It was perhaps not surprising that those in search of a term which would denote a unitive mode of awareness in which duality would be overcome find in *realization* a term which could serve their purpose.

However, there are considerable differences between the thinkers who used the word, to say nothing of the diverse associations trailed by it in ideational contexts outside India. In fact, to turn the searchlight of inquiry on some of these thinkers is above all to reveal the extent of the incompatibility between, say, Hegel and Sankara, something which is masked in the valiant efforts of neo-Vedantic philosophers to speak of non-dual experience in terms which English-knowing readers with some knowledge of philosophy in the West would find intelligible. What they wished to press home was the concept of *higher* knowledge, something which in the nature of things was not susceptible of theorization but only of experience. But at this point a significant modality appeared. In lieu of the more traditional teaching (traceable in the main to Patanjali), that the development of some faculties depended on the restraint of others, the notion of integral experience appeared. Those who spoke about this did not all mean the same thing by it, but the idea that all human faculties could be drawn upon can be found especially in Sri Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan. In the latter's case there also appears an interpretation of Tagore's thought with which Tagore himself may not have been fully in agreement. There was herein most surely a synoptic motive. But I believe there was something more—an Indian alternative to *paideia* and to *Bildung* (structure, organization, education), a rethought, modern *saṁskṛti*. I would even say the spelling out of realization in Indian terms encapsulated *anubhava yoga*, and *darśana* (in its root meaning). That the Indian perspective in this respect was believed to be quite distinctive is writ large in Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan.

It may not be an exaggeration to say that,

for all these thinkers what realization was for the individual, *freedom* would be for India on a national scale. The image of awakening for both the individual and the nation is invoked by both Sri Aurobindo and Tagore. Philosophical reflection and *jātiya bhāva* often converged. Another motive in realization discourse, and in Swami Vivekananda especially, was opposition to the strategies of the missionaries, a *Kulturkampf* (culture war) that had been in process especially in Bengal since the time of Raja Rammohun Roy. Its main focus was sustained opposition to doctrine and dogma. The need of the hour—to Swami Vivekananda and his successors—was not belief but practice, not creeds but *sevā*.³ There is clearly an affinity in the various treatments of realization as higher knowledge, ranging from integral experience to the goal of the unitive, from idealism seen as ethical rather than speculative, to a synoptic understanding which as Brajendranath Seal insisted (using the word *synthetic*) was seen as typically Indian. In any case, for all the Germanic lineage of the word 'realization' Indian thinkers were by and large not concerned with *Geist*, or alienation, or the Kantian distinction between the possible, the actual, and the necessary. If the Absolute were to be brought down to earth, that is, made accessible, it could not be in Hegelian fashion through the State, for the State apparatus was not as yet in Indian hands. Self-realization was a feasible target for a self-respecting individual, and not without relation to the coming of that dawn into which the country would eventually awaken.

3. The following may be of interest in this connection. Franz Rosenzweig, a close friend of Buber, wrote to his former teacher Friedrich Meinecke: 'Cognition (*Erkennen*) no longer appears to me an end in itself. It has turned into service, a service to human beings.' Rosenzweig to Friedrich Meinecke, 30 August 1920, cited in Nahum N. Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought* (New York: Schocken, 1972), p. 114.

III

It may not be generally known that in the early part of this century Martin Buber, whose concept of I and Thou later brought him into prominence in the English speaking world, had been deeply attracted to realization as a philosophical idea.⁴ Buber's pre-dialogical thinking, that is, in the first decade of this century, centred on the concept of *Erlebnis* or lived experience (also adventure), a term which came into philosophical currency through Dilthey's distinction between *Naturwissenschaften* (natural sciences) and *Geisteswissenschaften* (the arts, humanities) and the associated distinction between *Erfahrung* (experience, knowledge, practice) and *Erlebnis*. What was at stake was not only the contrast between the natural sciences and the human sciences but also the experience of things as against the interiority of lived experience. The notion of lived experience no doubt owed much to Kant's treatment of inner sense. Very un-Kantian overtones appeared, however, when Buber rethought *Erlebnis* in the light of his doctoral work on Nicholas of Cusa and Jacob Boehme. Buber held that a mystic had a special type of *Erlebnis* in which he could achieve unity with the *Urelebnis* (similar to *Erlebnis*) of the world spirit.

At the same time fundamental questions about the methodology of psychology were in the air. All this was fully discussed at a club called the Neue Gemeinschaft at the University of Berlin while Buber was a student there. How could subjective minds interact socially? This was the question posed by Simmel, Buber's teacher. In the meantime Dilthey, his other teacher, posed philosophical questions about life, something which was not to be conflated with *Geist* (mind, morale, spirit). Buber's own search for unitive experience at this stage drew him away from the individuation presupposed by the concept of social interaction. He polarized cognizing man (*der Erkennende*) to experiencing man (*der Enlebende*). And yet on reflection the notion of the 'lived through' is hardly adequate to express

either the mystical experience or between one person and another. A similar difficulty may attend the concept of *anubhava* which of course has a different cultural setting. What ensued after Buber is part of the story of continental thought in this century. While some found in *Existenz* an alternative to both *Geist* and *Leben*, Buber moved from mysticism⁵ to dialogue or what he called '*die Ontologie des Zwischenmenschlichen*' (ontology of the inter-human). What years later he described as 'the narrow ridge, where I and Thou meet' could not be fitted into the rarefied atmosphere of 'realization'.

His early work entitled *Daniel*, however, still repays study for it provides the most deeply thought-out attempt by a scholar outside Indian traditions to do justice to the concept of realization, and to this we now turn. *Daniel* was published in Leipzig in 1913 and manifested the many influences working in Buber's mind during the first decade of the century. He was familiar with a certain amount of 'Oriental' thought, especially Taoism, but it is more likely that his own way of envisaging *realization* was derived from Western sources. Those who spoke of the human sciences, Dilthey in particular, detected an element of empathetic awareness therein which provided the condition for the possibility of 'entering into' human phenomena. This was a notion of *verstehen* (to understand) very differ-

4. *Daniel: Dialogues on Realization* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965).

5. In so doing he distanced himself, for example, from Rudolf Steiner's *Geistesforschung* and the question that gives the title to one of his books '*Wie erlangt man Erkenntnisse hoherer Welten?*' Steiner had a considerable influence on a close friend of Buber's, Hugo Bergman, who did not rule out the existence of upper worlds (hence his interest in Sri Aurobindo). Buber's answer to this is contained in his rhetorical question 'What concern of ours, if they exist, are the upper worlds?' (*The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, 1981), p. 115.

ent from the Kantian one. In a religious, rather than sociological context, Kierkegaard spoke of the need to 'appropriate' the truth, to make it one's own rather than treat it objectively. This involved *living* in a certain way rather than being intellectually persuaded through argument or informed through perception.

This reference to life rather than thought chimes in with the Hasidic belief in the need to actualize the divine in daily life, something made possible through an intensifying of religious experience which yet steers clear of pantheism. The influence of Nietzsche on German philosophers at this time can also be recalled. This took various forms. The most common, and the one discernible in the young Buber, was an anti-intellectualism which drew on confidence in the powers which work in the direction of unities, of dynamism, rather than in the service of categories and distinctions. That herein lies a certain romantic effusiveness must be admitted. But let us turn to the work itself.

It consists of five dialogues which Daniel and his friends (each dialogue being Socratic in form, friends succeeding each other in dialogue) close in on the meaning of reality given that, as Daniel says in the first dialogue, 'We cannot ascend into the spaceless.' In the second dialogue he speaks of a twofold relation of man to his experience—classifying, and realizing or making real. Realization, he explains, means heightened existence, heightened knowledge. (Dilthey had spoken of the philosopher's task as that of heightened awareness). In this heightened existence, power is drawn from the depths and collected and moved to action and renewed in work. In Buber's view 'the power to become unified and to enter into reality' is in everyone. But it is not actualized in all. He mentions 'the hero and the wise man', 'the poet and the prophet', as 'unifying men'. What is happening in today's world, Buber goes on to say, is the replacing of 'realizing men' by 'producers'—those who work without being, who give what they do not possess, who triumph

where they have not fought: the pet children of appearance. This sounds very much like the concept of objectivity seen as embodied in the consumer society. What Buber decries is *manipulation*, 'the dams of theories, of programmes, of parties', each of which, when thought through, is manipulative in some manner or other.

The third dialogue stresses that realization is the kingdom of holy insecurity for 'All creation stands on the edge of being; all creation is risk.' The fourth dialogue speaks of tension and incompleteness in drama and poetry and the polarity within man that 'wills unity'. The fifth dialogue centres on the most difficult moment of the work. By unity Buber does not mean identity, for unity is won in the midst of polarity and tension. It is probably Kant whom he strives with in the following: 'Human life cannot escape the conditioned. But the unconditioned stands ineffaceably inscribed in the heart of the world.' The focus is on death and life. The call is to 'take upon yourself the tension of life and death and live through the life and death of the world as your life and your death.' The concluding symbol of the book is the sea,⁶ a fitting metaphor for a unity which surrounds, which is ever-moving, which invites, and yet, to so many, spells fear. It is a symbol used by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa for a somewhat different purpose, namely, to point up the need for a total self-giving, a willingness to lose all to gain all. The folk element which is so strong in Sri Ramakrishna is by no means absent in Buber. In the latter's case it is derived from the legends of Ba'al Shem Tov. Both men, that is to

6. Cf. the monograph written in 1917 by Franz Rosenzweig in which the author finds in Thallatta (the sea) the proper symbol for unity, since the earth inherently has boundaries. Also relevant is the desire of members of the Patmos circle at this time to break away from historicism, not to say that the being and becoming which the sea is can effectively counter what the historicist wants to say.

say, are sensitive to the wisdom of the people, a wisdom which shows itself in story rather than in discourse. If a work such as *Daniel* occasions disquiet among the scholarly this is because its form is not the form of argument. It preserves the quality of confession but, *qua* dialogue, uses the dramatic form. The leap in thought required of the reader involves the willingness to grant the interrelatedness of ontology, aesthetics and ethics, and to allow that there is cognitive import in such interrelatedness. To rule out such an enterprise is to rule out a great deal of both Indian and Western thought, to say nothing of Chinese and Japanese thought. In any case I take it that Indian scholars should not find it difficult to agree that there are contexts in which living in a certain way is a condition of knowing and that knowing in turn manifests itself in certain characteristic ways of acting.

IV

The purpose of the foregoing has been to examine realization as a mode of cognition rather than simply a mode of experience. In the Indian treatments we found that the reference to realization often accompanied the discourse of spirit and the spiritual, and an appeal to *anubhava*. Whereas the first two of these terms, realization and spirit, seem to have a post-Hegelian flavour, the third term has a longer lineage. Neo-Vedantic thinkers found nothing strange in making cognitive claims for realization under the umbrella of 'higher' knowledge. The language of 'degrees of knowledge' was sometimes involved, unsuited though it was for referring to the *pāramārthika* since the latter had invariably been regarded as different in *kind* and not only in degree by classical Vedantins. In Indian philosophical circles at the turn of the century this was not the only incompatibility which surfaced. The pedigree of the word *Geist*, correlated though it was to Nature as its counterpart was to be discerned at work in *history* seen as the operation of a rational principle. No such association has ever been attributed to the Brahman-Atman equation, nor can it.

To go back a bit, some clarification may be needed of my distinction between cognition and experience at the beginning of the last paragraph. By non-cognitive experiences I have in mind what Patanjali calls 'perturbations' and some German idealists called 'agitations' or 'affections'. What Kant regarded as *Schwaermeri* (enthusiasm) belongs to this category. Of *another* type are the *transitions* between *noeses* spoken of by Husserl as non-cognitive. As for realization, the difficulty in specifying what the putative cognition was of was dealt with by putting it in a unique basket of its own wherein the distinction between subject and object would be inappropriate. It was precisely this aspect of it that justified the extended term *self-realization*. The diverse motivations that lay behind such thinking are not hard to divine. They include, for example, an affirmation of the superiority of *ātmavidyā* to other sorts of *vidyā*, a shift from textual to experiential warrant (vouchsafed to specially qualified persons) and this is not all. The political agenda, if I may call it that, could not easily be accommodated in the programme, or at least in the programme as I am venturing to see it, within the context of *Kulturkritik*. For realization to be both individual and national, the *pāramārthika* had to be related to the *vyāvahārika* in a way which, on reflection, cut at the root of the distinction. And yet an attempt to relate the two is surely made by the most adventurous of neo-Hindu thinkers, not only as a necessity recognized by nationalist consciousness, but in no small measure thanks to a Comtian undercurrent especially in Bengali intellectual life which looked to the *future* rather than the past, that is, which looked to the possibility of progress. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's joint advocacy of *anuvāṇa* and *svadeśa-prīti* set the tone. Moreover a generation grew up in Bengal which had read Tom Paine's *Age of Reason* in Bengali translation. Perhaps only in Bengal could the term *śakti* also be invoked as Bankim does in order to elicit a dynamism of powers no less vigorously promoted by Swami Vivekananda.

Those who spoke of realization were trying to bring the *turiya* down to earth. Swami Vivekananda's ability to identify with the poor made the whole exercise credible by turning it upside down, that is, seeing God in the eyes of the poor. Realizing for him took on its root meaning of 'making actual', insight actualizing itself in service. In this way he was able to discover an ethical imperative in an insight which of itself was bootless unless it was translated into action. Or, put in another way, the 'achieved' cognitive import of 'realization' indicated embodiment in the world of action. Cognition *simpliciter* is neatly put in its place.

In going along this path Vivekananda encounters Buber in the latter's response to 'the other'. But for Buber this necessarily meant a turning away from the mystical. Vivekananda's insights antedates Buber's by about a decade and a half. But it is worth noting that while both thinkers grant that the concept of realization amounted to a cognitive category of a privileged kind, Vivekananda makes it fully compatible with social consciousness, indeed with conscience, these being the very factors the need for which drives Buber away from it. The achievement of each is considerable. Vivekananda's neo-Vedanta regenerated the notion of realization by transferring it from the realm of *vita contemplativa* to *vita activa*. And Buber saw that the making actually involved in *Verwirklichung* (implementation, realization) was in practice not an individual task so much as one which drew upon the relations between 'man and man'.⁷ Interestingly enough there are passages like the following written by Buber which match in fervour both Bankim's and Vivekananda's

thought:

Power of the storming spirit to stir up the conflagration, security of the constructing soul to hold itself in the purifying fire: these are forces which guide a people to rejuvenated life.⁸

At all events in the treatment of realization by some modern Indian thinkers we find a chiming in of insight with a Western thinker where we might least expect it. In each case we find both drawing on heritage and a surmounting of it. Furthermore, in each there is a refusal to divorce the cognitive from the world of human relations, and this without turning to the manipulative contexts focused on by pragmatism.

I find the comparison of interest, in fact, precisely because the thinkers I have touched on refused to confine cognition to epistemology but saw that the highest aspirations to knowledge must have radical bearing on human relations and be firmly rooted in them. Only thus can illumination illuminate the world.⁹

7. This is the insight which drew him to the *Halutz* (pioneer settler) movement. In 1919 he said: 'The true locus of realization is community and true community is that in which the divine becomes realized among men' (oration delivered in memory of Gustav Landauer); and in 1923: 'that to "realize God" is to help the world to become divine reality (*Gottwirklich*)' (introduction to *Reden ueber das Judentum*, p. 119).

8. *Die juedische Bewegung*, I.216 ff.

9. I here borrow a phrase often used by H.H. Price in his classroom lectures on perception.

Nothing real can be achieved in the field of religion by mere talk. It is a thing to be practised—with all the intensity of life and soul. We can never hope to attain even a bit of religion if we rest contented by simply making a verbal reproduction of the teachings of our scriptures like a talking machine, and make no further move. He alone has spirituality who has the internal realization of it.

—Swami Premananda

The Hero and the Dedicated

The birth anniversaries of two of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples will be celebrated this month: Swami Niranjanananda's on 15th and Swami Advaitananda's on 28th. We present a few illustrations to show what exemplary lives the two lived.

Swami Niranjanananda

Sri Ramakrishna ran towards the young Niranjan like a mother running towards her child one day when the latter visited him, and said: 'My boy, days are passing, when will you realize God? And if you do not realize God, the whole life will be meaningless. I am extremely anxious as to when you will wholeheartedly devote yourself to God.'

Holy Mother said: 'What an austere life they (the monastic disciples of Ramakrishna) led at the Baranagore monastery! Niranjan and others often starved themselves. They spent all their time in japa and meditation. One day they resolved among themselves: "Well, we have renounced everything in the name of Sri Ramakrishna. Let us see if he will supply us with food if we simply depend on him. Neither will we tell anyone about our wants nor will we go out for alms." Saying so, they covered themselves with their shawls and sat down for meditation. The whole day passed. It was late at night. They heard someone knocking at the door. Naren left the seat and asked one of his brother-monks: "Please open the door and see who is there. First check if he has anything in his hand." What a miracle! When the door was opened, they found that a man had come from Lala Babu's Krishna temple near the Ganges with various delicacies in his hand. They were overjoyed and became convinced of the protecting hand of Sri Ramakrishna. They then offered that food to the Master and partook of the prasad. Such things happened many a time.'

Swami Achalananda said: 'Swami Niranjanananda was a strong person and was not afraid of anybody. He considered the Master his only refuge. He appreciated those who had

a dauntless nature. He had tremendous faith in the doctrine of service as established by Swami Vivekananda and he encouraged people to serve human beings as manifestations of God. He was a man of truth and wanted others also to adhere to the truth. He did not care for people who did not keep their word. He would inspire young people to follow the path of renunciation. He used to do physical exercise regularly and he encouraged the young men to keep their bodies strong and active.'

Swami Advaitananda

Swami Virajananda said about Swami Advaitananda: 'In September 1895 I stopped at Varanasi on my way to Vrindaban and stayed with Gopal-da [Advaitananda] at Ban-shi Datta's house. His room was small but neat and clean. He was very methodical and economical. Very early in the morning, even in the cold winter, he would bathe in the Ganges and return to his cottage chanting Sanskrit hymns on gods and goddesses. He practised japa and meditation until 9:00 am, and then he would go to beg alms from door to door. He was extremely punctual about his spiritual disciplines, eating, sleeping, walking, and other activities.'

The young novitiates who came from modern schools and colleges could hardly rise to Advaitananda's standard of perfection regarding work, and for that reason they had a very hard time with him. Many of them received mild scoldings from the old swami, but they took his criticisms more as a token of affection than as any indication of bitterness. One day he had a revelation, which he described later: 'The Master has shown me that it is he who is manifested through all. Then who is there to blame or whom to criticize?' □

The Theft

Bhanu was tied with a rope. He was taken out of the king's palace. Soldiers of the king walked him towards the place of execution; they dragged him, rather. Bhanu walked with his head bent. How suddenly had fate ordained that his life should end thus!

It was a strange event indeed. Bhanu was walking along the streets happily when soldiers had spotted him. They had instantly arrested him and brought him before the king. Imagine the king's anger! 'You dare commit such a heinous crime? Aren't you ashamed?' the king had shouted in anger. 'My lord! Allow me to place before you my...' The king had thundered: 'No, I won't! I shall not allow you to speak even a word. ... Soldiers, take him away and impale him on the *śūla*. I want my order to be carried out instantly.' That was the king's order. Who could go against the king?

'My God! Why are you testing me so?' Bhanu cried in anguish. 'O my sweet Lord! I want you alone! All these trials are nothing, my dear Vitthala. I want you!' One of the soldiers barked, 'Shut up!' Bhanu smiled and kept quiet. 'The man appears to be from a good family. What has he done?' someone was overheard enquiring. 'Good family? See his unkempt hair, unshaven beard, dirty clothes! Good family indeed,' said someone else.

It was the necklace—that shining necklace, which could easily be spotted from a great distance—which did all the mischief. But was it the necklace? It was the Lord Himself who did all the mischief! If not, how on earth could the gates of the temple open? How indeed could Bhanu enter the inner sanctum? How could he get the necklace at all?

The news had spread like wildfire. 'The image is gone!' Everyone was shocked. The

devotees wept. It was as if their hearts themselves had been stolen. How wonderful had been their days, singing kirtans and listening to discourses on the *Bhagavata* and other scriptures in the temple! The soil of Pandharapur had been blessed by the presence of such a beautiful temple and such a beautiful image. The air of Pandharapur reverberated with the names of God and carried the sweet scent of incense and flowers offered to the Lord all around. Pandharapur had become a holy village.

But the image was gone one morning. No one could tell, or would tell, where it had gone. Those who knew wouldn't tell. Bhanu's heart bled most. He loved kirtan like his own life, and now the daily kirtans had stopped. He wept day and night. Bhanu's love for kirtan was legendary. Was it not this very attraction for kirtan that had made him lose his wealth once? That, again, is a long story.

Since his childhood, Bhanu had dearly loved to serve God and devote himself to Him. He was married at an early age because his parents had forced him to do so. He had two sons. So, though marriage and family life had changed his superficial ways to some extent, deep within, the yearning for God struggled to find expression always; it was like a volcano ready to erupt any moment. Thus he began to devote himself more and more to kirtans and temple service, but his family suffered and starved. They virtually had little at home to eat. The village elders weren't blind to such suffering. Seeing their pitiable condition, they had jointly donated a small sum to Bhanu, advising him to invest that amount in some business and prosper. Bhanu wasn't the cruel type, not to care for his family's suffering. Luck favoured him and he prospered soon. In spite of his intense hunger for singing God's glories, he succeeded in his business. This

caused not a little jealousy in the minds of some other businessmen. They talked about Bhanu's prosperity with fear and contempt.

Bhanu and a few other businessmen had been to sell clothes one day to a distant town. While returning, they decided to spend the night in some guest-house. Soon they heard the sound of drums and cymbals. 'Kirtan, isn't it?' asked Bhanu with delight and, leaving everything behind, ran to the join the kirtan. The jealous businessmen threw all his things into the nearby ravine. Even as they were discussing future strategy, robbers came and took away everything from them. Within minutes the entire scene had changed: the joyful businessmen were left weeping and wailing.

When Bhanu returned, he saw his friends in great distress. They confessed their greed as well as their misfortune. Bhanu said, 'Come on! Let us search out the bundles that you have thrown away.' They did and brought them back. Bhanu gave away all that to the merchants. Not only that, he took them home and distributed most of his wealth too. He wanted only his God and nothing else. Days rolled by.

But all of a sudden everything seemed to go awry with the theft of the Lord's image. It was then that he determined to find out the thief. It was then that he left Pandharapur. Where he went, how he went, what he ate, where he slept—all these are known to Bhanu alone. After days of vain search, his feet had brought him to Vijayanagar. The grand kingdom of Vijayanagar confused this innocent villager. But he was happy to learn some news about his dear Vitthala. In the capital, he heard that the image was in the king's custody. He gathered from people that the king, Ramadeva Raja, had heard about Pandharapur and the Vitthala image there, and also of the imminent advent of Muslim rulers. So he had secretly brought the image of Vitthala over to his kingdom and placed it in safe custody. No sooner did Bhanu hear the news than he was eager to see the Lord. One early morning, before anyone woke up, Bhanu went to the temple.

It was still dark. Bhanu went near the entrance. It had been securely locked. He prayed, 'O Lord, here I am, Your servant from

Pandharapur. You have come away, leaving us there. Will You not show Yourself to me?' The Lord heard. The door opened as if by magic. Bhanu walked in. The lock of the inner sanctum too opened magically. He went straight inside. There He was, the Lord of his heart, Vitthala, smiling sweetly and standing alone. Tears ran down Bhanu's face in torrents. He had found his dear Vitthala after days of search. He embraced the Lord. The pain of days came out: 'Why are you so cruel, my Lord? Why did you come away?' Bhanu went on talking to his dear Lord. He cried, 'I want you now. Come on. Let's go. Come on, my Vitthala!'

The Lord spoke! 'My child! I shall come. But wait for one more day.' But the devotee was adamant. He cried, 'I know you don't wish to come. Today I could somehow manage to come here. Will I be allowed tomorrow? Please come, let's go.' Vitthala told his dear devotee, 'You see, I place My necklace around your neck. This necklace will help you take Me out. Now, before the priests come, go away.' Bhanu understood the danger of his being there and left. He walked along the streets in joy. It was then that they caught him.

Bhanu was brought to the place of execution. A huge spike (*śūla*) had been fixed to the ground. Bhanu was in another world altogether. Bhanu saw only the Lord! It was only his dear Vitthala that he saw everywhere.

When the soldiers were about to lift him and end his life, to everyone's astonishment, the *śūla* got converted into a fruit tree! 'Miracle! Miracle!' everyone shouted. People rushed to the place to see the miracle. The news reached the king. He came. What he saw stunned him. The king too paid his respects to Bhanu. He said: 'I am so sorry to have misunderstood you. Tell me how you got the necklace.' Bhanu related the story. The king said, 'I shall arrange to send Vitthala today itself with you to Pandharapur.'

Who was Bhanu? Bhanu or Bhanudas was the great-grandfather of Sant Eknath. He was born in the year 1448 in Paithana, Maharashtra. □

Book Reviews

MEDITATION AND MANTRAS: By Swami Vishnu-devananda. Published by Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt Ltd, 41-UA Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, New Delhi 110007. 1999. Pp. 269. Rs.150.

It is a hundred years now since Swami Vivekananda introduced the American and English populace to yoga. He not only delivered lectures, held classes and gave practical demonstrations and instructions but also encouraged the publication of his talks on the four yogas in book form. The first three were first published from New York, London and Madras respectively in 1896. All the four have served as standard texts ever since.

Over the last hundred years, the great interest of Western people in Eastern spirituality, philosophy and culture has been met by a good number of teachers visiting as well as settling down in the West to preach and propagate Eastern thought and spiritual methods. Swami Vishnu-devananda, an eminent disciple of Swami Shivananda of Rishikesh, was one of those teachers who have done important work in propagating the yoga-methods in the West.

Meditation and Mantras, already in its third edition, is a sequel to the Swami's *The Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga*. In a brief compass of 267 pages the Swami has covered not only the general principles and practice of meditation but has also summarized the theory and practice of meditation in Hatha Yoga (also called Kundalini or Laya Yoga), Vedanta (or Jnana Yoga), Bhakti Yoga and Raja Yoga systems. The whole of the yoga aphorisms of Patanjali have been given with translation and brief comments. The practice of japa is discussed with explanations on a large number of mantras and *bija-aksharas*, along with their presiding deities. A chapter reviewing modern electronic meditation and biofeedback techniques has also been added. The last two chapters discuss the obstacles to meditation and the various experiences that the yogi has on his spiritual path.

Written by an experienced spiritual practitioner, the book gives an authentic overview of the subject in accordance with tradition, with an emphasis on the practical aspects. However, notes on high spiritual states following in quick succession to basic yoga techniques may give the novice a mistaken impression that high spiritual states are there for the asking. Although warnings about the

need for prolonged and steady practice, under a qualified teacher, lie interspersed in the book, a prefatory note on the same would have been more appropriate. Discussions of the preliminary preparatory disciplines in a little greater detail could also have put things in perspective. The author has rightly warned the reader to beware of teachers offering 'instant success' recipes. The limited usefulness of biofeedback techniques in providing true spiritual experiences is also pointed out. Diacritical marks could be introduced in the future editions to help readers unfamiliar with Sanskrit terms. Proofs could also be checked thoroughly.

Meditation and Mantras will certainly provide a useful overview of the yoga techniques while giving practical hints to their practice.

Swami Satyaswarupananda
Belur Math

PRANAMIKA (Bengali): Published by The Secretary, Sarada Kalyan, 10 Raja Rajkrishna Street, Calcutta 700006. 1999. Pp. 300. Rs.100.

Those devotees who often say with regret that they did not have the good fortune to be the contemporaries of Sri Ramakrishna and experience the enveloping warmth of his love will realize by reading a book like *Pranamika* that each generation of Sri Ramakrishna's sons is an embodiment of the all-encompassing affection which Sri Ramakrishna bestowed so abundantly on those who came into contact with him. To spend some years in close proximity with any of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order is indeed a rare good fortune; especially if it is with a person of the stature of Swami Bhuteshanandaji, it is a unique privilege.

To those who are the disciples of Swami Bhuteshanandaji, the book is a rich feast and an exploration, a process of coming to know at close range that exceptional personality who has moulded their lives from a distance thus far. Not all those who are his disciples had the ability to see him regularly or be intimate with him. Therefore the book is a treasure for all such disciples. For other devotees of the holy trinity, too, this book is invaluable. It brings back faith in humanity that, amidst all the gloom of despair which surrounds us at present, we still have beacon lights like the Swamiji shining to dispel the darkness of the world.

The volume has a range of essays dealing with

the dedicated existence of a great soul who lived for others and never thought of himself even in the last moment of his earthly existence. It begins with an introduction to Sarada Kalyan, an organization that received the benediction of Swami Bhuteshanandaji. This introduction sets the tone of the volume by being a brief biographical sketch of the Swamiji. The homage speaks of the Swamiji's sweet nature, his childlike smiling countenance, his serious spiritual instructions alternating with his jovial witticisms, all of which were inherent parts of his multifaceted personality.

Essays by eminent monks and others, verses paying homage to the illustrious yet self-effacing twelfth President of the Ramakrishna Order, dramatized conversations—in Bengali mainly, but interspersed with English and Hindi, too, provide a variety to the impressive volume of memoirs. To highlight a few: Swami Ritananda speaking of Bhuteshanandaji's childhood narrates an incident when in an exam he peeped into another student's answer book but could not copy because his conscience warned him that what he was doing was not right. Pravrajika Amalaprana remembers his sympathy for the less fortunate in a touching incident of the van rickshaw. Swami Achyutananda recollects the Swamiji's phenomenal memory of the scriptures when he was the former's teacher at the Training Centre. Swami Purnananda narrates an incident when Bhuteshanandaji, then a novice in the Order, was reprimanded by Swami Saradananda, the then General Secretary of the Order. Swami Vimalatmananda describes how Bhuteshanandaji had learnt in a real-life situation from his guru Saradananda that one should never say 'no' to anyone. Swami Sthiratmananda speaks of the numerous dimensions of Bhuteshanandaji's teachings which each of his students could interpret according to his/her temperament and capacity. Swami Ritananda, in another essay, quotes Bhuteshanandaji as saying that he is not a 'guru' but only a representative of 'Satchidananda guru'. The other lay disciples pour their deep emotion and involvement in touching remembrances, which need to be read again and again and savoured. I wish I could reproduce at least a part of each contribution in the volume. For once the reviewer felt

that it is indeed difficult to review a 300-page book in a single page.

The only suggestion one feels like offering at the end of many readings of the volume is: how much wider circulation such an excellent volume would receive if made available in English too. Maybe Sarada Kalyan will take up the task in the future out of consideration for the thousands of disciples of the Swamiji who do not know Bengali as well as others who enjoy reading books about such wonderful personalities.

Dr Sumita Roy

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ANUGRAHAM—TWENTY-FOUR GURUS:
By Charu Jalundhwala. Published by the author, 9 CAPRI, 9 Manav Mandir Road, Malabar Hills, Mumbai 6. 1998. Pp. 24. Rs.25.

Readiness to learn is all that matters. When the 'disciple' in us is aroused, teachers are not wanting: they appear spontaneously from the common workaday world, eager to impart their message. There is no time or place bar to learning. This simple fact of learning is best illustrated in the well-known story of Avadhuta Dattatreya in the *Bhagavata* (11th canto). The Avadhuta's earnest desire to learn brings to him lessons from everything around. He learns from the earth, from a python, from fire, from fish—even from a worm! Such is the ingenuity of his learning faculty—there is nothing which cannot teach. This episode of the Avadhuta is well brought out in the book under review. This small but highly readable booklet contains an exposition of the 24 gurus of the Avadhuta, with occasional relevant references to verses from the *Gita*, the *Ramcharit-manas* and *Bhaja Govindam*. This booklet is an attempt to help spiritual aspirants develop an attitude of humility, sincerity and alertness in their lives, and to turn all situations in life into spiritually rewarding events.

Swami Atmashraddhananda
Ramakrishna Vidyashala, Mysore

The only way to lasting peace is complete surrender to the will of God. Restlessness destroys all peace of mind. When the mind becomes restless one should pray earnestly to God, for He alone is the abode of peace. Constant recollection of God will bring an overflowing blessedness.

—Swami Shivananda

News and Reports

Presentation of the Vivekananda Award for 1999 and 2000

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, presented its Vivekananda Award for 1999 and 2000 to Pandit Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharya Shastri and Dr Vinayak Ramachandra Karandikar for their outstanding work on Swami Vivekananda. A cash prize of Rs.25,000 and a citation accompanied the award. Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, presented the award, and Mr Viren J. Shah, Governor of West Bengal, presided over the function held on 22 April 2000.

The Vivekananda Award was instituted to encourage research on the life, teachings and works of Swami Vivekananda. A selection committee comprising eminent persons chooses an outstanding scholar for his or her significant contribution to Vivekananda studies. The award is financed through an endowment created at the Institute by Prof Tarapada Choudhuri, formerly head of the department of economics, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.

Ms Marie Louis Burke (now Gargi) of San Francisco was the first recipient in 1982 of this prestigious award. Prof Sankari Prasad Basu, formerly professor of Bengali at the University of Calcutta, received this award in 1986. Three other awardees were Prof Subodh Chandra Sengupta in 1989, Dr E.P. Chelishchev of the erstwhile Soviet Union in 1990 and Sri T.S. Avinashilingam in 1994.

The Vivekananda Award for 1999 went to Pandit Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharya Shastri, Tarkatirtha, Vedantatirtha, for his outstanding contribution to Indian philosophy and for his efforts to spread the thoughts and vision of Swami Vivekananda. Sri Bhattacharya has authored many books including *Prachina Bharatiya Manovidya*, *Sambandha Vartika (Vedanta)*, *Bharatiya Tarka Vidya*, *Praveshika*, *Purnayogi Sri Ramakrishna* and *Saddarshana Yoga*. He received the Rabindra Memorial Prize and the Hanuman Prize of Sahitya Anusandhan Sansthan, Varanasi, for his scholarly books. The Institute took special note of his *Vivekanander Vedanta Chinta*, a unique interpretation of the Vedantic foundation of Vivekananda's thoughts. This 272-page treatise in Bengali is a classic research work on Vivekananda's tireless striving to interweave Dvaita, Advaita and Visishtadvaita.

Dr Vinayak Ramachandra Karandikar was given the Award for 2000 for his scholarly interpretation of Indian spiritual heritage and for his study of the ideas and ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and

Swami Vivekananda. Author of many books, Dr Karandikar has added a new dimension to Ramakrishna-Vivekananda studies in Marathi. His *Vishwamanav Swami Vivekananda* is a search for the great soul in human frame and can be treated as a unique contribution to Vivekananda studies in a regional language. His book *Ramakrishna and Vivekananda* traces the development of these two great souls from the human to the divine level. His *Ramakrishna Sangha: Ek Shatakachi Watchal (Ramakrishna Order: Journey through a Hundred Years)* gives a vivid historical account of this internationally reputed organization. He made a comparative study of two great philosophers in his *Jnanadeva and Vivekananda*. The University of Pune offered him professorship of the Sri Jnanadeva chair in recognition of his work in the field of saint literature, philosophy and Indian culture. Dr Karandikar's dispassionate study of the life and times of Swami Vivekananda, his comparative study of Swamiji with other wise men of India, and his ceaseless endeavour to bring the message of Indian philosophy to the common masses by holding discourses in the towns and villages of Maharashtra won him the Institute's appreciation.

Gujarat Cyclone Rehabilitation

Sri Ramakrishna Sanskar Dham, a colony built by Ramakrishna Mission, Porbandar, for the rehabilitation of cyclone-affected families of Vadala village, consisting of 20 cyclone-proof houses, a prayer hall, a community hall, tubewells and other infrastructure, was inaugurated by Sri Sundar Singh Bhandari, Governor of Gujarat, on 22 February 2000. Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, performed the dedication of the prayer hall.

